SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

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A

COMEDY,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

WORKS.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR E. POWELL, BRIAT[illegible]

COVENT GARDEN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir Peter Teazle,	Mr. KING.
Sir Oliver Surface,	Mr. AICKIN.
Joseph Surface,	Mr. PALMER.
Charles,	Mr. WRONGHTON.
Crabtree,	Mr. SUETT.
Sir Benjamin Backbite,	Mr. R. PALMER.
Rowley,	Mr. PACKER.
Moſes,	Mr. WATHEN.
Careleſs,	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
Trip,	Mr. TRUEMAN.
Snake,	Mr. CAULFIELD.

WOMEN.

Lady Teazle,	Mrs. JORDAN.
Maria,	Miſs MILLER.
Lady Sneerwell,	Mrs. GOODALL.
Mrs. Candour,	Miſs POPE.

SCENE—LONDON.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ACT I.

SCENE, *Lady Sneerwell's House.*

Lady SNEERWELL *and* SNAKE *discovered at a tea-table.*

Lady Sneerwell.

THE paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted.

Snake. They were, madam; and, and copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion from whence they came.

L. Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish in the common course of things. I think it must reach Mrs. Clacket's ears within twenty-four hours, and then the business, you know, is as good as done.

L. Sneer. Why yes, Mrs. Clacket has talents, and a good deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces;—nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tete-a-tete* in the Town and Country Magazine, when the parties never saw one another in their lives.

L. Sneer. Why yes, she has genius, but her manner is too gross.

Snake. True, madam; she has a fine tongue, and a bold invention; but then, her colouring is too dark, and the outlines rather too extravagant; she wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

L. Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the leaſt; every body will allow that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look, than many others with the moſt laboured detail, even though they accidentally happen to have little truth on their ſide to ſupport it.

L. Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake, and I'll not deny the pleaſure I feel at the ſucceſs of my ſchemes. [*both riſe*] Wounded myſelf, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of ſlander, I confeſs nothing can give me greater ſatisfaction, than reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. True, madam; but there is one affair, in which you have lately employed me, wherein I confeſs I am at a loſs to gueſs at your motives.

L. Sneer. I preſume you mean with regard to my friend Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.

Snake. I do; here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a guardian ſince their father's death; the eldeſt poſſeſſing the moſt amiable character, and univerſally well ſpoken of: the youngeſt, the moſt diſſipated, wild, extravagant young fellow in the world; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyſhip, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confeſſedly admired by her: Now, on the face of theſe circumſtances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a large fortune, ſhould not immediately cloſe with the paſſion of a man of ſuch a character and expectation as Mr. Surface; and more ſo, why you are ſo uncommonly earneſt to deſtroy the mutual attachment ſubſiſting between his brother Charles and Maria.

L. Sneer. Then at once, to unravel this myſtery, I muſt inform you, that love has no ſhare whatever in the intercourſe between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

L. Sneer. No: His real views are to Maria, or her fortune, while in his brother he finds a favoured rival; he is, therefore obliged to maſk his real intentions, and profit by my aſſiſtance.

Snake. Yet ſtill I am more puzzled why you ſhould intereſt yourſelf for his ſucceſs.

L. Sneer. Heavens! how dull you are! Can't you ſurmiſe a weakneſs I have hitherto, through ſhame, concealed even from you? Muſt I confeſs it, that Charles, that pro-

figate, that libertine, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing.

Snake. Now indeed your conduct appears consistent; but pray, how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

L. Sneer. For our mutual interest; he pretends to, and recommends sentiment and liberality; but I know him to be artful, close and malicious: In short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with most of his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of virtue, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes, I know Sir Peter vows he has not his fellow in England, and has praised him as a man of character and sentiment.

L. Sneer. Yes; and, with the appearance of being sentimental, he has brought Sir Peter to favour his addresses to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house, tho' I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Surface, madam.

L. Sneer. Shew him up; [*Exit servant*] he generally calls about this hour—I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Lady Sneerwell, good morning to you—Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

L. Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me upon our attachment, but I have told him our real views; I need not tell you how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, our confidence has not been ill placed.

Jos. Oh, madam, 'tis impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's merit and accomplishments.

L. Sneer. Oh, no compliments; but tell me when you saw Maria, or, what's more material to us, your brother.

Jos. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can tell you they never met; some of your stories have had a good effect in that quarter.

L. Sneer. The merit of this, my dear Snake, belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Every hour. I am told he had another execution in his house yesterday.—In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed any thing ever heard.

L. Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Ay, poor Charles indeed! notwithstanding his extravagance one cannot help pitying him. I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves to be———

L. Sneer. Now you are going to be moral, and forget you are among friends.

Jos. 'Gad, so I was, ha! ha!—I'll keep that sentiment 'till I see Sir Peter, ha! ha! however it would certainly be a generous act in you to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who if he is to be reclaimed at all, can only be so by a person of your superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to your ladyship. Mr. Surface, your most obedient. [*Exit.*

Jos. Mr. Snake, your most obedient. I wonder, Lady Sneerwell, you would put any confidence in that fellow.

L. Sneer. Why so?

Jos. I have discovered he has of late had several conferences with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward; he has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

L. Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Not unlikely; and take my word for it, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow has not virtue enough to be faithful to his own villanies.

Enter MARIA.

L. Sneer. Ah, Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Nothing, madam, only this odious lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and his uncle Crabtree, just called in at my guardian's; but I took the first opportunity to slip out, and run away to your ladyship.

L. Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Had my brother Charles been of the party, you would not have been so much alarmed.

L. Sneer. Nay, now you are too severe; for I dare say the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you was here, and

therefore came; but pray, Maria, what particular objection have you to Sir Benjamin that you avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, madam, he has done nothing; but his whole converſation is a perpetual libel upon all his acquaintance.

Joſ. Yes, and the worſt of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him, for he would abuſe a ſtranger as ſoon as his beſt friend, and his uncle is as bad.

Mar. For my part, I own wit loſes its reſpect with me, when I ſee it in company with malice;——what think you, Mr. Surface?

Joſ. To be ſure, madam,—to ſmile at a jeſt, that plants a thorn in the breaſt of another, is to become a principal in the miſchief.

L. Sneer. Pſhaw—there is no poſſibility of being witty without a little ill nature; the malice in a good thing is the barb that makes it ſtick.——What is your real opinion, Mr. Surface?

Joſ. Why my opinion is, that where the ſpirit of raillery is ſuppreſſed, the converſation muſt be naturally inſipid.

Mar. Well, I will not argue how far ſlander may be allowed; but in a man, I am ſure it is deſpicable.—We have pride, envy, rivalſhip, and a thouſand motives to depreciate each other; but the male ſlanderer muſt have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs. Candour, madam, if you are at leiſure, will leave her carriage.

L. Sneer. Deſire her to walk up. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Maria, here's a character to your taſte; though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, yet every body allows ſhe is the beſt natured ſort of a woman in the world.

Mar. Yes—with the very groſs affectation of good nature, ſhe does more miſchief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Joſ. Faith 'tis very true, and whenever I hear the current of abuſe running hard againſt the characters of my beſt friends, I never think them in ſuch danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

L. Sneer. Huſh! huſh! here ſhe is.

Enter Mrs. CANDOUR.

Mrs. Cand. Oh! my dear Lady Sneerwell; well, how

do you do; Mr. Surface, your most obedient.—Is there any news abroad? No! nothing good I suppose—No, nothing but scandal! nothing but scandal!

Jos. Just so indeed, madam.

Mrs. Cand. Nothing but scandal!—Ah, Maria, how do you do, child; what, is every thing at an end between you and Charles? What, is he too extravagant—Ay! the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am sorry, madam, the town is so ill employed.

Mrs. Cand. Ay, so am I, child—but what can one do? we can't stop people's tongues.—They hint too, that your guardian and his lady don't live so agreeably together as they did.

Mar. I am sure such reports are without foundation.

Mrs. Cand. Ay, so things generally are:—'Tis like Mrs. Fashion's affair with Colonel Coterie; though, indeed, that affair was never rightly cleared up; and it was but yesterday Miss Prim assured me, that Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon are now become more man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted, that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner.

Jos. The licence of invention, some people give themselves, is astonishing.

Mrs. Cand. 'Tis so—but how will you stop people's tongues? 'Twas but yesterday Mrs. Clacket informed me, that our old friend Miss Prudely was going to elope, and that her guardian caught her just stepping into the York Diligence with her dancing-master. I was informed too, that Lord Flimsy caught his wife at a house of no extraordinary fame, and that Tom Saunter and Sir Harry Idle were to measure swords on a similar occasion.—But I dare say there is no truth in the story; and I would not circulate such a report for the world.

Jos. You report! No, no, no.

Mrs. Cand. No, no,—tale bearers are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Benjamin Backbite and Mr. Crabtree.

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter Sir BENJAMIN *and* CRABTREE.

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, your most obedient humble servant.

Mrs. Candour, I believe you don't know my nephew Sir Benjamin Backbite; he has a very pretty taſt for poetry, and ſhall make a rebus or a chirard with any one.

Sir Benj. Oh fie! uncle.

Crab. In faith he will: did you ever hear the lines he made at Lady Ponto's route on Mrs. Frizzle's feathers catching fire; and the rebuſes——his firſt is the name of a fiſh; the next a great naval commander, and——

Sir Benj. Uncle, now prythee.

L. Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publiſh any thing.

Sir Benj. Why, to ſay the truth, 'tis very vulgar to print——and as my little productions are chiefly ſatires, and lampoons on particular perſons, I find they circulate better by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties;——however, I have ſome love-elegies, which when favoured by this lady's ſmiles [*to Maria*] I mean to give to the public.

Crab. 'Foregad, Madam, they'll immortalize you [*to Maria*], you will be handed down to poſterity, like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharriſſa.

Sir Benj. Yes, madam, I think you'll like them [*to Maria*] when you ſhall ſee them on a beautiful quarto type, where a neat rivulet of text ſhall murmur throw a meadow of margin;—'foregad they'll be the moſt elegant things of their kind.

Crab. But, odſo, Ladies, did you hear the news?

Mrs. Cand. What——do you mean the report of——

Crab. No, madam, that's not it——Miſs Nicely going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Cand. Impoſſible!

Sir Benj. 'Tis very true indeed, madam; every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries beſpoke.

Crab. Yes, and they do ſay there were very preſſing reaſons for it.

Mrs Cand. I heard ſomething of this before.

L. Sneer. Oh! it cannot be; and I wonder they'd report ſuch a thing of ſo prudent a lady.

Sir Benj. Oh! but, madam, that is the very reaſon that it was believed at once; for ſhe has always been ſo very cautious and reſerved, that every body was ſure there was ſome reaſon for it at bottom.

Mrs. Cand. It is true, there is a ſort of puny, ſickly reputation, that would outlive the robuſter character of an hundred prudes.

Sir Benj. True, madam; there are Valetudinarians in reputation as well as conſtitution, who, being conſcious of their weak part, avoid the leaſt breath of air, and ſupply their want of ſtamina by care; and circumſtances have often given riſe to the moſt ingenious tales.

Crab. Very true;—but odſo, ladies, did you hear of Miſs Letitia Piper's loſing her lover and her character at Scarborough.—Sir Benjamin, you remember it.

Sir Benj. Oh, to be ſure, the moſt whimſical circumſtance!

E. Sneer. Pray let us hear it.

Crab. Why, one evening, at Lady Spadille's aſſembly, the converſation happened to turn upon the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia ſheep in this country; no, ſays a lady preſent, I have ſeen an inſtance of it, for a couſin of mine, Miſs Letitia Piper, had one that produced twins. What, what, ſays old Lady Dundizzy (whom we all know is as deaf as a poſt), has Miſs Letitia Piper had twins!—This you may eaſily imagine ſet the company in a loud laugh; and the next morning it was every where reported, and believed, that Miſs Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and girl.

Omens. Ha, ha, ha!

Crab. 'Tis true, upon my honour.—Oh, Mr. Surface, how do you do; I hear your Uncle, Sir Oliver, is expected in town; ſad news upon his arrival to hear how your brother has gone on.

Joſ. I hope no buſy people have already prejudiced his uncle againſt him—he may reform.

Sir Benj. True, he may; for my part, I never thought him ſo utterly void of principle as people ſay—and tho' he has loſt all his friends, I am told nobody is better ſpoken of amongſt the Jews.

Crab. 'Foregad, if the Old Jewry was a ward, Charles would be an Alderman, for he pays as many annuities as the Iriſh Tontine; and when he is ſick, they have prayers for his recovery in all the Synagogues.

Sir Benj. Yet no man lives in greater ſplendor.—They tell me, when he entertains his friends, he can ſit down to

dinner with a dozen of his own ſecurities, have a ſcore of tradeſmen waiting in the antichamber, and an officer behind every gueſt's chair.

Joſ. This may be entertaining to you, gentlemen; but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. Their malice is intolerable. [*Aſide.*] Lady Sneer, well, I muſt wiſh you a good morning; I'm not very well. [*Exit Maria.*

Mrs. Cand. She changes colour.

L. Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her.

Mrs. Cand. To be ſure I will;——poor dear girl, who knows what her ſituation may be. [*Mrs. Candour follows her.*

L. Sneer. 'Twas nothing, but that ſhe could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithſtanding their difference.

Sir Benj. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crab. Come, don't let this diſhearten you——follow her, and repeat ſome of your odes to her, and I'll aſſiſt you.

Sir Benj. Mr. Surface, I did not come to hurt you, but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. Oh! undone as ever man was—can't raiſe a guinea.

Sir Benj. Every thing is ſold, I am told, that was moveable.

Crab. Not a moveable left except ſome old bottles and ſome pictures, and they ſeem to be framed in the wainſcot, egad.

Sir Benj. I am ſorry to hear alſo ſome bad ſtories of him.

Crab. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Benj. But, however, he's your brother.

Crab. Ay! as he is your brother——we'll tell you more another opportunity. [*Exeunt Crab and Sir Benj.*

L. Sneer. 'Tis very hard for them, indeed, to leave a ſubject they have not quite run down.

Joſ. And I fancy their abuſe was no more acceptable to your ladyſhip than to Maria.

L. Sneer. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine;—but the family are to be here this afternoon, ſo you may as well dine where you are; we ſhall have an opportunity of obſerving her further;—in the mean time, I'll go and plot miſchief, and you ſhall ſtudy. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *Sir Peter Teazle's House.*

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect?——'Tis now above six months since my Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since.——We tifted a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells were done ringing. I was more than once nearly choaked with gall during the honey-moon, and had left every satisfaction in life, before my friends had done wishing me joy.——And yet, I chose with caution a girl bred wholly in the country, who had never known luxury beyond one silk gown, or dissipation beyond the annual gala of a race-ball.—Yet now, she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the town, with as good a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor-square.—I am sneered at by all my acquaintance——paragraphed in the newspapers——she dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours.——And yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this——but I am determined never to be weak enough to let her know it——No! no! no!

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Sir Peter, your servant, how do you find yourself to-day?

Sir Pet. Very bad, Mr. Rowley; very bad indeed.

Rowl. I'm sorry to hear that—what has happened to make you uneasy since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A pretty question truly to a married man.

Rowl. Sure my lady is not the cause!

Sir Pet. Why! has any one told you she was dead?

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Peter, notwithstanding you sometimes dispute and disagree, I am sure you love her.

Sir Pet. Ay, Mr. Rowley; but the worst of it is, that in all our disputes and quarrels, she is ever in the wrong; and continues to thwart and vex me;——I am myself the sweetest tempered man in the world, and so I tell her an hundred times a-day.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter!

Sir Pet. Yes—and then there's lady Sneerwell, and the

ſet ſhe meets at her houſe, encourage her to diſobedience; and Maria, my ward, ſhe too preſumes to have a will of her own, and refuſes the man I propoſe for her; deſigning, I ſuppoſe, to beſtow herſelf and fortune upon that profligate his brother.

Rowl. You know, Sir Peter, I have often taken the liberty to differ in opinion with you, in regard to theſe two young men; for Charles, my life on't, will retrieve all one day or other.—Their worthy father, my once honoured maſter, at his years, was full as wild and extravagant as Charles now is: but at his death he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loſs.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, Maſter Rowley, you are very wrong;—by their father's will, you know, I became guardian to theſe young men, which gave me an opportunity of knowing their different diſpoſitions; but their uncle's Eaſtern liberality ſoon took them out of my power, by giving them an early independence.—But for Charles, whatever good qualities he might have inherited, they are long ſince ſquandered away with the reſt of his fortune; Joſeph, indeed, is a pattern for the young men of the age—a youth of the nobleſt ſentiments, and acts up to the ſentiments he profeſſes.

Rowl. Well, well, Sir Peter, I ſhan't oppoſe your opinion at preſent, though I am ſorry you are prejudiced againſt Charles, as this may probably be the moſt critical period of his life, for his uncle, Sir Oliver, is arrived and now in town.

Sir Pet. What! my old friend, Sir Oliver, is he arrived? I thought you had not expected him this month.

Rowl. No more we did, Sir, but his paſſage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. I ſhall be heartily glad to ſee him—'Tis ſixteen years ſince old Nol and I met—But does he ſtill enjoin us to keep his arrival a ſecret from his nephews?

Rowl. He does, Sir; and is determined, under a feigned character, to make trial of their different diſpoſitions.

Sir Pet. Ah! there is no need of it; for Joſeph, I am ſure is the man—But hark'ye, Rowley, does Sir Oliver know that I am married?

Rowl. He does, Sir, and intends ſhortly to wiſh you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we wiſh health to a friend in a conſumption.—But I muſt have him at my houſe—do you con-

duct him, Rowley, I'll go and give orders for his reception [*going*]. We uſed to rail at matrimony together—he has ſtood firm to his text.—But, Rowley, don't give him the leaſt hint that my wife and I diſagree, for I would have him think (Heaven forgive me) that we are a very happy couple.

Row. Then you muſt be careful not to quarrel whilſt he is here.

Sir Pet. And ſo we muſt—but that will be impoſſible!——Zounds, Rowley, when an old batchelor marries a young wife, he deſerves—ay, he deſerves——no, the crime carries the puniſhment along with it.

ACT II.

SCENE, SIR PETER TEAZLE'S *Houſe.*

Enter SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE.

SIR PETER.

LADY Teazle, Lady Teazle, I won't bear it.

L. Teazle. Very well, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, juſt as you pleaſe; but I know I ought to have my own way in every thing, and what's more, I will.

Sir Pet. What, madam! is there no reſpect due to the authority of a huſband?

L. Teaz. Why, don't I know that no woman of faſhion does as ſhe is bid after her marriage.—Though I was bred in the country, I'm no ſtranger to that; if you wanted me to be obedient, you ſhould have adopted me, and not married me—I'm ſure you were old enough.

Sir Pet. Ay, there it is—Oons, madam, what right have you to run into all this extravagance?

L. Teaz. I'm ſure I am not more extravagant than a woman of quality ought to be.

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I'll have no more ſums ſquandered away upon ſuch unmeaning luxuries: you have as many flowers in your dreſſing-rooms as would turn the Pantheon into a green-houſe; or make a Fete Champetre at a maſ——

L. Teaz. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame that flowers don't blow in cold weather; you muſt blame the climate, and not me—I'm ſure, for my part, I wiſh it was ſpring all the year round, and that roſes grew under our feet.

Sir Pet. Zounds, madam, I ſhould not wonder at your extravagance if you had been bred to it—Had you any of theſe things before you married me?

L. Teaz. Lord, Sir Peter, how can you be angry at thoſe little elegant expences?

Sir Pet. Had you any of thoſe little elegant expences when you married me?

L. Teaz. For my part, I think you ought to be pleaſed your wife ſhould be thought a woman of taſte.

Sir Pet. Zounds, madam, you had no taſte when you married me.

L. Teaz. Very true, indeed; and after having married you, I ſhould never pretend to taſte again.

Sir Pet. Very well, very well, madam; you have entirely forgot what your ſituation was when I firſt ſaw you.

L. Teaz. No, no, I have not; a very diſagreeable ſituation it was, or I'm ſure I never would have married you.

Sir Pet. You forget the humble ſtate I took you from—the daughter of a poor country 'Squire.—When I came to your father's, I found you ſitting at your tambour, in a linen gown, a bunch of keys at your ſide, and your hair combed ſmoothly over a roll.

L. Teaz. Yes, I remember very well;—my daily occupations were to overlook the dairy, ſuperintend the poultry, make extracts from the family-receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Pet. Oh! I am glad to find you have ſo good a recollection.

L. Teaz. My evening employments were to draw pattern for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; play at Pope Joan with the curate; read a ſermon to my aunt Deborah; or perhaps be ſtuck up at an old ſpinnet to thrum my father to ſleep after a fox-chace.

Sir Pet. Then you was glad to take a ride out behind the butler, upon the old dock'd coach-horſe.

L. Teaz. No, no, I deny the butler and the coach-horſe.

Sir Pet. I ſay you did. This was your ſituation—Now, madam, you muſt have your coach, viz-a-viz, and three powdered footmen to walk before your chair; and in ſummer, two white cats to draw you to Kenſington-gardens: and inſtead of your living in that hole in the country, I

have brought you home here, made a woman of fortune of you, a woman of quality—in ſhort, I have made you my wife.

L. Teaz. Well, and there is but one thing more you can now do to add to the obligation, and that is——

Sir Pet. To make you my widow, I ſuppoſe.

L. Teaz. Hem!——.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam, very well; I am much obliged to you for the hint.

L. Teaz. Why then will you force me to ſay ſhocking things to you. But now we have finiſhed our morning converſation, I preſume I may go to my engagements at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Lady Sneerwell!—a precious acquaintance you have made of her too, and the ſet that frequent her houſe. —Such a ſet, mercy on us! Many a wretch who has been drawn upon a hurdle, has done leſs miſchief than thoſe barterers of forged lies, coiners of ſcandal, and clippers of reputation.

L. Teaz. How can you be ſo ſevere; I am ſure they are all people of faſhion, and very tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, ſo tenacious of it, they'll not allow it to any but themſelves.

L. Teaz. I vow, Sir Peter, when I ſay an ill-natured thing I mean no harm by it, for I take it for granted they'd do the ſame by me.

Sir Pet. They've made you as bad as any of them.

L. Teaz. Yes——I think I bear my part with a tolerable grace.——

Sir Pet. Grace indeed!

L. Teaz. Well but, Sir Peter, you know you promiſed to come.

Sir Pet. Well I ſhall juſt call in to look after my own character.

L. Teaz. Then, upon my word, you muſt make haſte after me, or you'll be to late. [*Exit Lady Teazle.*

Sir Pet. I have got much by my intended expoſtulation—What a charming air ſhe has!—What a neck, and how pleaſingly ſhe ſhews her contempt of my authority!——Well, though I can't make her love me, 'tis ſome pleaſure to teaze her a little, and I think ſhe never appears to ſuch advantage, as when ſhe is doing every thing to vex and plague me.

SCENE, *Lady* SNEERWELL'S *House.*

Enter Lady SNEERWELL, CRABTREE, *Sir* BENJAMIN, JOSEPH, *Mrs.* CANDOUR, *and* MARIA.

L. Sneer. Nay, positively we'll have it.

Jos. Ay, ay, the epigram by all means.

Sir Benj. Oh! plague on it, 'tis mere nonsense.

Crab. Faith, ladies, 'twas excellent for an extempore.

Sir Benj. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances—You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Bab Carricle was taking the dust in Hyde-Park, in a sort of duodecimo phæton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in a moment produced the following: ———

"Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,
"Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies;
"To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
"Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long."

Crab. There, ladies,—done in the crack of a whip—and on horseback too.

Jos. Oh! a very Phœbus mounted———

Mrs. Cand. I must have a copy.

Enter Lady TEAZLE.

L. Sneer. Lady Teazle, how do you do—I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. I believe he will wait on your ladyship presently.

L. Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave; come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—but I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

L. Teaz. I wonder he would sit down to cards with Maria. ——I thought he would have taken an opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Cand. Well, now I'll forswear his society. [*Aside.*

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Cand. Why, they are so censorious, they won't allow our friend Miss Vermillion to be handsome.

L. Sneer. Oh, surely she's a pretty woman.

Crab. I'm glad you think so.

Mrs. Cand. She has a charming fresh colour.

L. Teaz. Yes, when it is freſh put on.

Mrs. Cand. Well, I'll ſwear 'tis natural, for I've ſeen it come and go.

L. Teaz. Yes, it comes at night, and goes again in the morning.

Sir Benj. True, madam, it not only goes and comes, but what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it.

Mrs. Cand. Well—and what do you think of her ſiſter?

Crab. What, Mrs. Evergreen—'foregad, ſhe's ſix-and-fifty if ſhe's a day.

Mrs. Cand. Nay, I'll ſwear two or three-and-ſixty is the outſide———I don't think ſhe looks more.

Sir. Benj. Oh, there's no judging by her looks, unleſs we could ſee her face.

L. Sneer. Well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take ſome pains to repair the ravages of time, ſhe certainly effects it with great ingenuity, and ſurely that's better than the careleſs manner in which the Widow Oaker chalks her wrinkles.

Sir Benj. Nay, now, my Lady Sneerwell, you are too ſevere upon the widow—Come, it is not that ſhe paints ſo ill, but when ſhe has finiſhed her face, ſhe joins it ſo badly to her neck, that ſhe looks like a mended ſtatue, in which the connoiſſeur may ſee at once, that the head is modern, though the trunk is antique.

Crab. What do you think of Miſs Simper?

Sir Benj. Why ſhe has pretty teeth.

L. Teaz. Yes, and upon that account never ſhuts her mouth but keeps it always a-jarr, as it were, thus [*ſhews her teeth.*

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Teaz. And, yet I vow that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal the loſſes in front—ſhe draws her mouth till it reſembles the aperture of a poor box, and all her words appear to ſlide out edge-ways as it were, thus—"*How do you do, madam?—Yes, madam.*

L. Sneer. Ha, ha, ha; very well, Lady Teazle—I vow you appear to be a little ſevere.

L. Teaz. In defence of a friend, you know, it is but juſt—But here comes Sir Peter, to ſpoil our pleaſantry.

Enter Sir PETER.

Sir Pet. Ladies, your ſervant—mercy upon me!—The whole ſet—a character dead at every ſentence. [*Aſide.*

Mrs. Cand. They won't allow good qualities to any one—not even good-nature to our friend Mrs Purſey.

Crab. What! the old fat dowager that was at Mrs. Quadrille's laſt night.

Mrs. Cand. Her bulk is her misfortune, and when ſhe takes ſuch pains to get rid of it you ought not to reflect on her.

L. Sneer. That's very true indeed.

L. Teaz. Yes—I'm told ſhe abſolutely lives upon acids and ſmall-whey, laces herſelf with pullies;—often in the hotteſt day in ſummer, you will ſee her on a little ſquat poney, with her hair platted and turned up like a drummer, and away ſhe goes puffing round the ring in a full trot.

Sir Pet. Mercy on me! this is her own relation; a perſon they dine with twice a-week. [*Aſide.*

Mrs. Cand. I vow you ſhan't be ſo ſevere upon the dowager; for let me tell you, great allowances are to be made for a woman who ſtrives to paſs for a flirt at ſix-and-thirty.

L. Sneer. Though ſurely ſhe's handſome ſtill; and for the weakneſs in her eyes, conſidering how much ſhe reads by candle light, 'tis not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Cand. Very true; and for her manner, I think it very graceful, conſidering ſhe never had any education; for her mother, you know, was a Welch milliner, and her father a ſugar-baker at Briſtol.

Sir Benj. Ay, you are both of you too good-natured.

Mrs. Cand. Well, I never will join in the ridicule of a friend; ſo I tell my couſin Ogle, and ye all know what pretenſions ſhe has to beauty.

Crab. She has the oddeſt countenance—a collection of features from all the corners of the globe.

Sir Benj. She has indeed an Iriſh front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir Benj. Dutch noſe.

Crab. Auſtrian lips.

Sir Benj. The complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth *a la Chinoiſe.*

Sir Benj. In ſhort, her face reſembles a table-drote at Spa, where no two gueſts are of a nation.

Crab. Or a Congreſs at the cloſe of a general war, where every member ſeems to have a different intereſt, and the noſe and the chin are the only parties likely to join iſſue.

Sir Benj. Ha, ha, ha.

L. Sneer. Ha, ha,——Well, I vow you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs. Cand. Well, I vow you shan't carry the laugh so, let me tell you that, Mrs. Ogle.

Sir Pet. Madam, madam, 'tis impossible to stop those good gentlemen's tongues; but when I tell you, Mrs Candour, that the lady they are speaking is a particular friend of mine, I hope you will be so good as not to undertake her defence.

L. Sneer. Well said, Sir Peter; but you are a cruel creature, too phelgmatic yourself for a wit, and too peevish to allow it to others.

Sir Pet. True wit, madam, is more nearly allied to good nature than you are aware of.

L. Teaz. True, Sir Peter; I believe they are so near a kin that they can never be united.

Sir Benj. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, one so seldom sees them together.

L. Teaz. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Pet. Foregad, madam, if they considered the sporting with reputations of as much consequence as poaching on manors, and passed an act for the preservation of fame, they would find many would thank them for the bill.

L. Sneer. O lud!—Sir Peter would deprive us of our *privileges.*

Sir Pet. Yes, madam; and none should then have the liberty to kill characters, and run down reputations, but *privileged* old maids, and *disappointed* widows.

L. Sneer. Go, you monster?

Mrs. Cand. But surely you would not be so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law for them too; and wherever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, I verily believe there never was a scandalous story without some foundation.

Sir Pet. Nine out of ten are formed on some malicious invention, or idle representation.

L. Sneer. Come, Ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a SERVANT, *who whiſpers* SIR PETER.

Sir Peter. I'll come directly———I'll ſteal away unperceived. [*Aſide.*

L. Sneer. Sir Peter, you're not leaving us.

Sir Pet. I beg pardon, ladies, 'tis particular buſineſs, and I muſt—But I leave my character behind me. [*Exit.*

Sir Benj. Well, certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of your's is a ſtrange being; I could tell you ſome ſtories of him would make you laugh heartily, if he was not your huſband.

L. Teaz. Oh, never mind that—This way.

[*They walk up and Exeunt.*

Joſ. You take no pleaſure in this ſociety.

Mar. How can I? If to raiſe a malicious ſmile at the misfortunes and infirmities of thoſe who are unhappy be a proof of wit and humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulneſs.

Joſ. And yet they have no malice in their hearts.

Mar. Then it is the more inexcuſable, ſince nothing but an ungovernable depravity of heart could tempt them to ſuch a practice.

Joſ. And is it poſſible, Maria, that you can thus feel for others, and yet be cruel to me alone!—Is hope to be denied, the tendereſt paſſion?

Mar. Why will you perſiſt to perſecute me on a ſubject on which you have long ſince known my ſentiments.

Joſ. Oh, Maria, you would not be thus deaf to me, but that Charles, that libertine, is ſtill a favoured rival.

Mar. Ungenerouſly urged! but whatever my ſentiments are, with regard to that unfortunate young man, be aſſured, I ſhall not conſider myſelf more bound to give him up, becauſe his misfortunes have loſt him the regard—even of a brother—[*Going out.*

Joſ. Nay, Maria, you ſhall not leave me with a frown? by all that's honeſt I ſwear—[*Kneels, and ſees Lady Teazle entering behind.*] Ah! Lady Teazle, ah! you ſhall not ſtir—[*To Maria*] I have the greateſt regard in the world for Lady Teazle, but if Sir Peter was once to ſuſpect——

Mar. Lady Teazle!———

L. Teaz. What is all this, child? You are wanting in the next room, [*Exit Maria*]——What is the meaning of all this?——What! did you take her for me!

Joſ. Why, you muſt know—Maria—by ſome means ſuſpecting—the—great regard I entertain for your Ladyſhip—was—was threatening—if I did not deſiſt, to acquaint Sir Peter——and I—I—was juſt reaſoning with her———

L. Teaz. You ſeem to have adopted a very tender method of reaſoning—pray, do you uſually argue on your knees?

Joſ. Why, you know, ſhe's but a child, and I thought a little bombaſt might be uſeful to keep her ſilent. But, my dear Lady Teazle, when will you come and give me your opinion of my library.

L. Teaz. Why, I really begin to think it not ſo proper: and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than faſhion dictates.

Joſ. Oh, no more;—a mere Platonic Ciceſbio, that every lady is intitled to.

L. Teaz. No further——and though Sir Peter's treatment may make me uneaſy, it ſhall never provoke me——

Joſ. To the only revenge in your power.

L. Teaz. Go, you inſinuating wretch——but we ſhall be miſſed, let us join the company.

Joſ. I'll follow your ladyſhip.

L. Teaz. Do'nt ſtay long, for I promiſe you Maria ſhan't come to hear any more of your reaſoning. [*Exit.*

Joſ. A pretty ſituation I am in—by gaining the wife I ſhall loſe the heireſs—I at firſt intended to make her ladyſhip only the inſtrument in my deſigns on Maria, but—I don't know how it is—I am become her ſerious admirer. I begin now to wiſh I had not made a point of gaining ſo very good a character, for it has brought me into ſo many confounded rogueries, that I fear I ſhall be expoſed at laſt. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *Sir* PETER TEAZLE'S *Houſe.*

Enter SIR OLIVER *and* ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Ha, ha, and ſo my old friend is married at laſt; eh, Rowley—and to a young wife out of the country, ha, ha, ha. That he ſhould buff to old batchelors ſo long, and ſink into a huſband at laſt.

Rowl. But let me beg of you, Sir, not to rally him upon the ſubject, for he cannot bear it, though he has been married theſe ſeven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance. Poor Sir Peter!——But you say he has entirely given up Charles——never sees him, eh?

Rowl. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I believe is greatly aggravated by a suspicion of a connection between Charles and Lady Teazle; and such a report I know has been circulated and kept up, by means of Lady Sneerwell, and a scandalous party who associate at her house; where, I am convinced, if there is any partiality in the case, Joseph is the favourite.

Sir Oliv. Ay, ay.—I know there are a set of mischievous prating gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has sense enough to know the value of it.—But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by any such, I promise you——No, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowl. I rejoice, Sir, to hear you say so; and am happy to find the son of my old master has one friend left however.

Sir Oliv. What! shall I forget, master Rowley, when I was at his years myself;——egad, neither my brother nor I were very prudent youths, and yet I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowl. 'Tis that reflection I build my hopes on—and, my life on't, Charles will prove deserving of your kindness.—But here comes Sir Peter.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Where is he? Where is Sir Oliver?—Ah, my dear friend, I rejoice to see you!——You are welcome to England a thousand—and a thousand times!—

Sir Oliv. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter—and I am glad to find you so well, believe me.

Sir Pet. Ah, Sir Oliver!—'Tis sixteen years since last we saw each other—many a bout we have had together in our time!

Sir Oliv. Ay! I have had my share——But what, I find you are married—hey, old boy!——Well, well, it can't be helped, and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you.—Yes, Sir Oliver, I have entered into that happy state—but we won't talk of that now

Sir Oliv. That's true, Sir Peter, old friends ſhould not begin upon grievances at their firſt meeting, no, no, no.

Rowl. [*Aſide to Sir Oliver*] Have a care, Sir;—don't touch upon that ſubject.

Sir Oliv. Well——ſo one of my nephews, I find, is a wild young rogue.

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, I grieve at your diſappointment there—Charles is, indeed, a ſad libertine—but no matter, Joſeph will make you ample amends—every body ſpeaks well of him.

Sir Oliv. I am ſorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honeſt fellow.—Every body ſpeaks well of him—phſhaw—then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools, as to the honeſt dignity of genious and virtue.

Sir Pet. What the plague! are you angry with Joſeph for not making enemies?

Sir Oliv. Why not, if he has merit enough to deſerve them.

Sir Pet. Well, we'll ſee him, and you'll be convinced how worthy he is.—He's a pattern for all the young men of the age—He's a man of the nobleſt ſentiments.

Sir Oliv. Oh! plague of his ſentiments—if he ſalutes me with a ſcrap of morality in his mouth I ſhall be ſick directly.—But don't however miſtake me, Sir Peter. I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts, and my friend Rowley and I have planned ſomething for that purpoſe.

Sir Pet. My life on Joſeph's honour.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your lady's health, and tell you all our ſchemes.

Sir Pet. Alons—done.

[*Sir Oliv.* And don't Sir Peter, be too ſevere againſt your old friend's ſon—Odds my life, I am not ſorry he has run a little out of the courſe—for my part, I hate to ſee prudence clinging to the green ſuckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round the ſaplin, and ſpoils the growth of the tree.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE, *Sir* PETER'S *House.*

Enter SIR PETER, SIR OLIVER *and* ROWLEY.

Sir Peter.

WELL, well, we'll ſee this man firſt, and then have our wine afterwards.—But, Rowley, I don't ſee the jeſt of your ſcheme.

Rowl. Why, Sir, this Mr. Stanley was a near relation of their mother's, and formerly an eminent merchant in Dublin—he failed in trade, and is greatly reduced; he has applied by letter to Mr. Surface and Charles for aſſiſtance—from the former of whom he has received nothing but fair promiſes; while Charles, in the midſt of his own diſtreſſes, is at preſent endeavouring to raiſe a ſum of money, part of which I know he intends for the uſe of Mr. Stanley.

Sir Oliv. Ay—he's my brother's ſon.

Rowl. Now, Sir, we propoſe, that Sir Oliver ſhall viſit them both, in the character of Mr. Stanley; as I have informed them he has obtained leave of his creditors to wait on his friends in perſon—and in the younger, believe me, you'll find one, who, in the midſt of diſſipation and extravagance, has ſtill, as our immortal bard expreſſes it, *A tear for pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity.*

Sir Pet. What ſignifies his open hand and purſe, if he has nothing to give. But where is this perſon you were ſpeaking of?

Rowl. Below, Sir, waiting your commands—You muſt know, Sir Oliver, this is a friendly Jew; one who, to do him juſtice, has done every thing in his power to aſſiſt Charles—Who waits—[*Enter a Servant*] deſire Mr. Moſes to walk up. [*Exit Servant.*

Sir Pet. But how are you ſure he'll ſpeak truth?

Rowl. Why, Sir, I have perſuaded him, there's no proſpect of his being paid ſeveral ſums he has advanced for Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is in town; therefore you may depend on his being faithful to his intereſt—Oh! here he comes, the honeſt Iſraelite.

Enter MOSES.

Sir Oliver, this is Mr. Moſes—Mr. Moſes, this is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver,—I have done all I could for him—but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky truly, for you had no opportunity of shewing your talent.

Mos. None at all; I had not the pleasure of knowing his distresses, 'till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him.

Mos. Yes, he knows that—This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will advance him some monies.

Sir Pet. What! a person that Charles has never borrowed money of before, lend him any in his present circumstances.

Mos. Yes——

Sir Oliv. What is the Gentleman's name?

Mos. Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. does he know Mr. Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. A thought strikes me—Suppose, Sir Oliver, you was to visit him in that character; 'twill be much better than the romantic one of an old relation; you will then have an opportunity of seeing Charles in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. Egad, I like that idea better than the other, and then I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Rowl. Gentlemen, this is taking Charles rather unawares; but, Moses, you understand Sir Oliver, and I dare say, will be faithful.

Mos. You may depend upon me.—This is very near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliv. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses.—But hold—I had forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There is no need—the principal is a Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he! I am very sorry for it—But then again am I not too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all—it would not be out of character if you went in your own chariot: would it, Moses.

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir Oliv. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly

ſome cant of uſury or mode of treating that I ought to know,

Sir Pet. As I take it, Sir Oliver, the great point is to be exorbitant in your demands—Eh, Moſes?

Moſ. Yes, dat is very great point.

Sir Oliv. I'll anſwer for't I'll not be wanting in that. eight or ten *per cent.* on the ſoan at leaſt.

Moſ. Oh! if you aſk him no more as dat you'll be diſcovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey, what the plague—how much then?

Moſ. That depends upon the circumſtances—if he appears not very anxious for the ſupply, you ſhould require only forty or fifty *per cent.* but if you find him in great diſtreſs, and he wants money very bad—you muſt aſk double.

Sir Pet. Upon my word, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium I mean—'tis a very pretty trade you're learning.

Sir Oliv. Truly I think ſo, and not unprofitable.

Moſ. Then you know you have not the money yourſelf, but are forced to borrow it of a friend.

Sir Oliv. O! I borrow it for him of a friend—do I?

Moſ. Yes, and your friend's an unconſcionable dog—but you can't help dat.

Sir Oliv. Oh! my friend's an unconſcionable dog—is he?

Moſ. And then he himſelf has not the monies by him, but is forced to ſell ſtock at a great loſs.

Sir Oliv. He's forced to ſell ſtock at a great loſs—well, really, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. But hark ye, Moſes, if Sir Oliver was to rail a little at the annuity bill, don't you think it would have a good effect?

Moſ. Very much.

Rowl. And lament that a young man muſt now come to years of diſcretion, before he has it in his power to ruin himſelf.

Moſ. Ay! a great pity.

Sir Pet. Yes, and abuſe the public for allowing merit to a bill, whoſe only object was to preſerve youth and inexperience from the rapacious gripe of uſury, and to give the young heir an opportunity of enjoying his fortune, without being ruined by coming into poſſeſſion.

Sir Oliv. So—ſo—, Moſes ſhall give me farther inſtructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You'll ſcarce have time to learn your trade, for Charles lives but hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh! never fear—my tutor appears ſo able, that though Sir Charles lived in the next ſtreet, it muſt be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I have turned the corner. [*Exeunt Sir Oliver and Moſes.*

Sir Pet. So Rowley, you ſhould have been partial, and given Charles notice of our plot.

Rowl. No indeed, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, I ſee Maria coming, I want to have ſome talk with her. [*Exit Rowley.*

Enter MARIA.

So Maria, What, is Mr. Surface come home with you?

Mar. No, Sir, he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Maria, I wiſh you were more ſenſible to his excellent qualities—does not every time you are in his company convince you of the merit of that amiable young man?

Mar. You know, Sir Peter, I have often told you, that of all the men who have paid me a particular attention, there is not one I would not ſooner prefer, than Mr. Surface.

Sir Pet. Ay, ay, this blindneſs to his merit proceeds from your attachment to that profligate brother of his.

Mar. This is unkind; you know, at your requeſt, I have forborne to ſee or correſpond with him, as I have long been convinced he is unworthy my regard; but while my reaſon condemns his vices, my heart ſuggeſts ſome pity for his misfortune.

Sir Pet. Ah! you had beſt reſolve to think of him no more, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother.

Sir Pet. Have a care, Maria, I have not yet made you know what the authority of a guardian is, don't force me to exert it.

Mar. I know, that for a ſhort time I am to obey you as my father—but muſt ceaſe to think you ſo, when you would compel me to be miſerable. [*Exit in tears.*

Sir Pet. Sure never was man plagued as I am; I had not been married above three weeks, before her father, a healthy hearty man, died—on purpoſe to plague me with the care of

his daughter: but here comes my helpmate, she seems in mighty good humour; I wish I could teaze her into loving me a little.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What's the matter, Sir Peter? What have you done to Maria? It is not fair to quarrel and I not by.

Sir Pet. Ah! Lady Teazle, it is in your power to put me into good humour at any time.

L. Teaz. Is it? I am glad of it—for I want you to be in a monstrous good humour now; come, do be good humoured, and let me have two hundred pounds.

Sir Pet. What the plague! can't I be in a good humour without paying for it—but look always thus, and you shall want for nothing. [*pulls out a pocket-book.*] There, there's two hundred pounds for you [*going to kiss*] now seal me a bond for payment.

L. Teaz. No, my note of hand will do as well.

[*Giving her hand.*

Sir Pet. Well, well, I must be satisfied with that—you shan't much longer reproach me for not having made you a proper settlement—I intend shortly to surprise you.

L. Teaz. Do you? You can't think, Sir Peter, how good humour becomes you; now you look just as you did before I married you.

Sir Pet. Do I indeed?

L. Teaz. Don't you remember when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and asked me if I could like an old fellow, who would deny me nothing?

Sir Pet. Ay, and you were so attentive and obliging to me then.

L. Teaz. Ay, to be sure I was, and used to take your part against all my acquaintance; and when my cousin Sophy used to laugh at me, for thinking of marrying a man old enough to be my father, and call you an ugly, stiff, formal old batchelor, I contradicted her, and said I did not think you so ugly by any means, and that I dar'd say, you would make a good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. That was very kind of you—Well, and you were not mistaken, you have found it so, have not you?—But shall we always live thus happy?

L. Teaz. With all my heart;—I'm—I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling—provided you will own you are tired first.

Sir Pet. With all my heart.

L. Teaz. Then we shall be as happy as the day is long, and never, never,—never quarrel more.

Sir Pet. Never—never—never—and let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

L. Teaz. Ay!—

Sir Pet. But, my dear Lady Teazle—my love—indeed you must keep a stricter watch over your temper——for, you know, my dear, that in all our disputes and quarrels, you always begin first.

L. Teaz. No, no, Sir Peter, my dear, 'tis always you that begins.

Sir Pet. No, no—no such thing.

L. Teaz. Have a care, this is not the way to live happy, if you fly out thus.

Sir Pet. No, no—'tis you.

L. Teaz. No—'tis you.

Sir Pet. Zounds! I say 'tis you.

L. Teaz. Lord! I never say such a man in my life—just what my cousin Sophy told me.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, saucy, impertinent minx.

L. Teaz. You are a very great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. But I am very well served for marrying you—a pert, forward, rural coquette; who had refused half the honest 'squires in the country.

L. Teaz. I am sure I was a great fool for marrying you—a stiff, crop, dangling old batchelor, who was unmarried at fifty because nobody would have him.

Sir Pet. You was very glad to have me——you never had such an offer before.

L. Teaz. Oh, yes I had—there was Sir Tivey Terrier, who every body said would be a better match; for his estate was full as good as yours, and—he has broke his neck since we were married.

Sir Pet. Very well—very well, Madam—you're an ungrateful woman; and may plagues light on me, if I ever try

to be friends with you again——you shall have a separate maintenance.

L. Teaz. By all means a separate maintenance.

Sir Pet. Very well, Madam—Oh, very well. Ay, Madam, and I believe the stories of you and Charles—of you and Charles, Madam,——were not without foundation.

L. Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter; take care what you say, for I won't be suspected without a cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. A divorce.——

L. Teaz. Ay, a divorce.

Sir Pet. Ay, zounds! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old batchelors.

L. Teaz. Well, Sir Peter, I see you are going to be in a passion, so I'll leave you, and when you are come properly to your temper, we shall be the happiest couple in the world, and never—never—quarrel more. Ha, ha, ha. [*Exit.*

Sir Pet. What the devil! can't I make her angry neither. I'll after her—Zounds—she must not presume to keep her temper.——No, no,—she may break my heart—but damn it—I'm determined she shant keep her temper. [*Exit.*

SCENE, CHARLES's *House.*

Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER *and* MOSES.

Trip. This way, gentlemen, this way—Moses, what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliv. Mr. Moses, what's my name? [*Aside.*

Mos. My Premium——

Trip. Oh, Mr. Premium,—very well. [*Exit.*

Sir Oliv. To judge by the servant, one would not imagine the master was ruined—Sure this was my brother's house.

Mos. Yes, Sir,—Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with furniture, pictures, &c. just as the old gentleman left it.—Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliv. In my mind, the other's œconomy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, my master is very sorry he has company at present, and cannot see you.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was that wanted to see him, perhaps he would not have sent such a message.

Trip. Oh! yes, I told him who it was—I did not forget my little Premium, no, no.

Sir Oliv. Very well, Sir; and pray what may your name be?

Trip. Trip, Sir; Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliv. Very well, Mr. Trip——You have a pleasant sort of a place here, I guess.

Trip. Pretty well.——There are four of us, who pass our time agreeable enough.—Our wages, indeed, are but small, and sometimes a little in arrear.—We have but fifty guineas a-year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets?—Halters and bastinadoes!

Trip. Oh, Moses, hark'ye, did you get that little bill discounted for me?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too!—Mercy on me!—He has distresses, I warrant, like a lord, and effects creditors and duns. [*Aside.*

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip. [*Gives the note.*

Trip. No! Why I thought when my friend Brush had set his mark on it, it was as good as cash.

Mos. No, indeed, it would not do.

Trip. Perhaps you could get it done by way of annuity.

Sir Oliv. An annuity!—A footman raise money by annuity—Well said, luxury, egad. [*Aside.*

Mos. Well, but you may insure your place.

Trip. Oh! I'll insure my life, if you please.

Sir Oliv. That's more than I would your neck. [*Aside.*

Trip. Well, but I should like to have it done before this damn'd register takes place; one would not wish to have one's name made public.

Mos. No certainly—But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, there's none of my master's cloaths will fall very soon, I believe; but I can give a mortgage on some of his winter suits, with equity of redemption before Christmas—or a *post obit* on his blue and silver. Now these, with a few pair of point-ruffles, by way of security, [*bell rings*] coming, coming, Gentlemen, if you'll walk this way, perhaps I may introduce you now.—— Moses, don't forget the annuity—I'll insure my place, my little fellow.

Sir Oliv. If the man is the shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed. [*Exeunt omnes.*

CHARLES, CARELESS, *Sir* TOBY, *and Gentlemen diſcovered drinking.*

Char. Ha, ha, ha.——Fore-heaven you are in the right—the degeneracy of the age is aſtoniſhing; there are many of our acquaintance who are men of wit, genius and ſpirit, but then they won't drink.

Care. True, Charles; they ſink into the more ſubſtantial luxuries of the table, and quite neglect the bottle.

Char. Right—beſides, ſociety ſuffers by it; for inſtead of the mirth and humour that uſed to mantle over a bottle of Burgundy, their converſation is as inſipid as the Spa-water they drink, which has all the tartneſs of Champaigne, without its ſpirit or flavour.

Sir Toby. But what will you ſay to thoſe who prefer play to the bottle?—There's Harry, Dick, and Careleſs himſelf, who are under a hazard regimen.

Char. Pſha! no ſuch thing—What, would you train a horſe for the courſe by keeping him from corn? Let me throw upon a bottle of Burgundy, and I never loſe; at leaſt I never feel my loſs, and that's the ſame thing.

1ſt Gent. True; beſides, 'tis wine determines if a man be really in love.

Char. So it is—fill up a dozen of bumpers to a dozen beauties, and ſhe that floats at the top is the girl that has bewitched you.

Care. But come, Charles, you have not given us your real favourite.

Char. Faith, I have withheld her only in compaſſion to you, for if I give her, you muſt toaſt a round of her peers, which is impoſſible [*ſighs*] on earth.

Care. We'll toaſt ſome Heathen deity, or celeſtial goddeſs, to match her.

Char. Why then bumpers—bumpers all round—Here's Maria—Maria—[*ſighs.*]

1ſt Gent. Maria—'pſha, give us her ſirname.

Char. Pſha—Hang her ſirname, that's too formal to be regiſtered in love's kalendar.

1ſt Gent. Maria then—Here's Maria.

Sir Toby. Maria—Come, here's Maria.

Char. Come, Sir Toby, have a care; you muſt give a beauty ſuperlative.

Sir Toby. Then I'll give you—Hete's———

Care. Nay, never heſitate.—But Sir Toby has got a ſong that will excuſe him.

Omnes. The ſong—the ſong.

SONG.

Here's to the maiden of bluſhing fifteen,
Now to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And then to the houſewife that's thrifty.
Let the toaſt paſs, drink to the laſs,
I warrant ſhe'll find an excuſe for the glaſs.

Here's to the charmer, whoſe dimples we prize,
Now to the damſel with none, Sir;
Here's to the maid with a pair of blue eyes,
And now to the nymph with but one, Sir.
Let the toaſt paſs, &c.

Here's to the maid with her boſom of ſnow,
Now to her that's as brown as a berry;
Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,
And now to the damſel that's merry.
Let the toaſt paſs, &c.

For let them be clumſy, or let them be ſlim,
Young or ancient I care not a feather;
So fill us a bumper quite up to the brim,
And e'en let us toaſt them together.
Let the toaſt paſs, &c.

TAIL *enters and whiſpers* CHARLES.

Charles. Gentlemen, I muſt beg your pardon; [*riſing*] I muſt leave you upon buſineſs.——Careleſs, take the chair.

Care. What, this is ſome wench, but we won't loſe you for her.

Charles. No, upon my honour—It is only a Jew and a broker that are come by appointment.

Care. A Jew and a broker! we'll have 'em in.

Charles. Then desire Mr. Moses to walk in.

Trip. And little Premium too, Sir.

Care. Ay, Moses and Premium. [*Exit Trip*] Charles, we'll give the rascals some generous Burgundy.

Charles. No, hang it—wine but draws forth the natural qualities of a man's heart, and to make them drink, would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter Sir Oliver *and* Moses.

Walk in, gentlemen, walk in; Trip, give chairs; sit down, Mr. Premium, sit down, Moses. Glasses, Trip; come, Moses, I'll give you a sentiment. "*Here's success to usury.*" Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. "Here's success to usury."

Care. True, Charles, usury is industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliv. Then here's "*All the success it deserves.*"

Care. Oh, damme, Sir, that won't do; you demur to the toast, and shall drink it in a pint bumper at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, Sir, consider Mr. Premium is a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine, and I'll see justice done to the bottle.—Fill, Moses, a quart.

Char. Pray, consider, gentlemen, Mr. Premium is a stranger.

Sir Oliv. I wish I was out of their company. [*Aside.*

Care. Come along, my boys, if they won't drink with us, we'll not stay with them; the dice are in the next room—You'll settle your business, Charles, and come to us.

Char. Ay, ay—But, Careless, you must be ready, perhaps I may have occasion for you.

Care. Ay, ay, bill, bond, or annuity, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit with the rest.*

Mos. Mr. Premium is a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes—Mr. Premium, this is——[*formally.*]

Charles. 'Pshaw! hold your tongue—My friend Moses, Sir, is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression—I shall cut the matter very short—I'm an extravagant young fellow that wants to borrow money; and you, as I take it, are a prudent old fellow who has got money to lend—I am such a fool as to give fifty per cent. rather than go without it:

and you, I ſuppoſe, are rogue enough to take an hundred if you can get it. And now we underſtand one another, and may proceed to buſineſs without further ceremony.

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word—I ſee you are not a man of compliments.

Charles. No, Sir.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it—However you are miſtaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure you ſome from a friend; but then he's a damn'd unconſcionable dog: is he not, Moſes?

Moſ. But you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. And then, he has not the money by him, but muſt ſell ſtock at a great loſs. Muſt he not, Moſes?

Moſ. Yes, indeed——You know I always ſpeak the truth, and ſcorn to tell a lie.

Charles. Ay, thoſe who ſpeak truth uſually do—And, Sir, I muſt pay the difference, I ſuppoſe—Why look ye, Mr. Premium, I know that money is not to be had without paying for it.

Sir Oliv. Well—but what ſecurity could you give?——You have not any land, I ſuppoſe!

Charles. Not a mole-hill, not a twig but what grows in bow-pots out at the window.

Sir Oliv. Nor any ſtock, I preſume.

Charles. None but live-ſtock, and they are only a few pointers and ponies.—But pray, Sir, are you acquainted with any of my connexions?

Sir Oliv. To ſay the truth, I am.

Charles. Then you muſt have heard that I have a rich old uncle in India, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greateſt expectations.

Sir Oliv. That you have a wealthy uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Charles. Oh yes, I'm told I'm a monſtrous favourite, and that he intends leaving me every thing.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! this is the firſt I have heard of it.

Charles. Yes, yes, he intends making me his heir——Does he not, Moſes.

Moſ. Oh yes, I'll take my oath of that.

Sir Oliv. Egad they'll perſuade me preſently that I'm at Bengal. [*Aſide.*

Charles. Now, what I propose, Mr. Premium, is to give you a *post obit* on my uncle's life. Though indeed my uncle Noll has been very kind to me; and upon my soul, I shall be sincerely sorry to hear any thing has happened to him.

Sir Oliv. Not more than I should I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be the worst security you could offer me, for I might live to be an hundred, and never recover the principal.

Charles. Oh, yes, you would, for the moment he dies you come upon me for the money.

Sir Oliv. Then I believe I would be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Charles. What, you are afraid, my little Premium, that my uncle has too good a life.

Sir Oliv. No indeed, I am not; tho' I have heard he's as hale and hearty as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles. Oh, there you are misinformed. No—no, poor uncle Oliver! he breaks apace. The climate, Sir, has hurt his constitution, and I'm told he's so much altered of late, that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir Oliv. No! ha, ha, ha; so much altered of late, that his nearest relations would not know him. Ha, ha, ha; that's droll, egad.

Charles. What are you pleased to hear he is on the decline, my little Premium.

Sir Oliv. No, I am not,—no, no, no.

Charles. Yes you are, for it mends your chance.

Sir Oliv. But I am told Sir Oliver is coming over—Nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Charles. Oh, there you are misinformed again—No—no such thing—he is this moment at Bengal. What! I must certainly know better than you.

Sir Oliv. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I; though I have it from very good authority—Have I not, Moses?

Mos. Most undoubtedly.

Sir Oliv. But, Sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing that you would dispose of?

Charles. How do you mean?

Sir Oliv. Bless me, how I have heard your father left behind him a great quantity of rich old plate.

Charles. Yes, but that's gone long ago—Moſes can inform you how, better than I can.

Sir Oliv. Good lack! all the family race-cups, and corporation bowls gone! [*Aſide.*] It was alſo ſuppoſed, that his library was one of the moſt valuable and complete.

Charles. Much too large and valuable for a private gentleman: for my part, I was always of a communicative diſpoſition, and thought it a pity to keep ſo much knowledge to myſelf.

Sir Oliv. Mercy on me! knowledge that has run in the family like an heir-loom. [*Aſide*] And pray, how may they have been diſpoſed of?

Charles. O! you muſt aſk the auctioneer that—I don't believe even Moſes can direct you there.

Moſ. No—I never meddle with books.

Sir Oliv. The profligate! [*Aſide*] And is there nothing you can diſpoſe of?

Charles. Nothing—unleſs you have a taſte for old family pictures. I have a whole room full of anceſtors above ſtairs.

Sir Oliv. Why ſure you would not ſell your relations?—

Charles. Every ſoul of them to the beſt bidder.

Sir Oliv. Nor your great uncles and aunts.

Charles. Ay, and my grandfathers and grandmothers.

Sir Oliv. I'll never forgive him this. [*Aſide*] Why!——what!——Do you take me for Shylock in the play, to raiſe money from me on your own fleſh and blood!

Charles. Nay, don't be in a paſſion, my little Premium; what is it to you, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. That's very true, as you ſay——Well, well, I believe I can diſpoſe of the family canvas. I'll never forgive him this. [*Aſide.*

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Come, Charles, what the devil are you doing ſo long with the broker——we are waiting for you.

Charles. Oh! Careleſs, you are juſt come in time, we are to have a ſale above ſtairs—I am going to ſell all my anceſtors to little Premium.

Care. Burn your anceſtors?

Charles. No, no, he may do that afterwards, if he will. [illegible] you ſhall be auctioneer.

But, Careleſs

Care. With all my heart—I handle a hammer as well as a dice-box—a-going, a-going.

Charles. Bravo!—And, Moſes, you ſhall be appraiſer, if we want one.

Moſ. Yes, I'll be the appraiſer.

Sir Oliv. Oh the profligate! [*Aſide.*

Charles. But what's the matter, my little Premium? You don't ſeem to reliſh this buſineſs.

Sir Oliv. [*Affecting to laugh*] Oh yes, I do vaſtly; ha, ha, ha, ——Oh the prodigal! [*Aſide.*

Charles. Very true; for when a man wants money, who the devil can he make free with if he can't with his own relations. [*Exit.*

Sir Oliv. [*Following*] I'll never forgive him.

ACT IV.

Enter CHARLES, SIR OLIVER, CARELESS, *and* MOSES.

CHARLES.

WALK in, gentlemen, walk in; here they are—the family of the Surfaces up to the Conqueſt.

Sir Oliv. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles. Aye, there they are, done in the true ſpirit and ſtyle of portrait-painting, and not like your modern Raphaels, who will make your picture independent of yourſelf;—no, the great merit of theſe are, the inveterate likeneſs they bear to the originals. All ſtiff and aukward as they were, and like nothing in human nature beſides.

Sir Oliv. Oh, we ſhall never ſee ſuch figures of men again.

Charles. I hope not——You ſee, Mr. Premium, what a domeſtic man I am; here I ſit of an evening ſurrounded by my anceſtors——But come let us proceed to buſineſs—To your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer—Oh, here's a great chair of my father's that ſeems fit for nothing elſe.

Care. The very thing—but what ſhall I do for a hammer, Charles? an auctioneer is nothing without a hammer.

Charles. A hammer! [*looking round.*] Let's ſee, what have we here—Sir Richard heir to Robert—a genealogy in full, egad——Here, Careleſs, you ſhall have no common bit of mahogany—here's the family-tree, and now you may knock down my anceſtors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue he is——An *ex post facto* parricide. [*Aside.*]

Care. 'Gad, Charles, this is lucky; it will not only serve for a hammer, but a catalogue too if we should want it.

Charles. True—Come, here's my great uncle Sir Richard Ravelin, a marvellous good general in his day——He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet——He is not dressed out in feathers like our modern captains, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be—What say you, Mr. Premium?

Mos. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Charles. Why, you shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's cheap enough for a staff officer.

Sir Oliv. Heaven deliver me! his great uncle Sir Richard going for ten pounds!—[*Aside.*]—Well, Sir, I take him at that price.

Charles. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.

Care. Going, going—a-going—gone.

Charles. This is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, thought to be one of his best pictures, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she sits, as a shepherdess feeding her flock.—You shall have her for five pounds ten. I'm sure the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. Ah, poor aunt Deborah, a woman that set such a value on herself going for five pounds ten [*Aside*]—Well, Sir, she's mine.

Charles. Knock down my aunt Deborah, Careless.

Care. Gone.

Charles. Here are two cousins of theirs—Moses, these pictures were done when beaux wore perriwigs, and ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliv. Yes, truly——head-dresses seem to have been somewhat lower in those days.

Charles. Here's a grandfather of my mother's, a judge well known on the western circuit. What will you give for him?

Mos. Four guineas.

Charles. Four guineas! why you don't bid the price of his wig. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack; do let me knock him down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care. Gone.

Charles. Here are two brothers, William and Walter Blunt, Esqrs. both members of parliament, and great speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That's very extraordinary indeed!—I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of parliament.

Charles. Well said, Premium.

Care. I'll knock them down at forty pounds—Going—going—gone.

Charles. Here's a jolly, portly fellow; I don't know what relation he is to the family; but he was formerly mayor of Norwich, let's knock him down at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No, I think six is enough for a mayor.

Charles. Come, come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They are mine.

Charles. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen.

Care. Gone.

Charles. But hang it, we shall be all day at this rate; come, come, give me three hundred pounds, and take all on this side the room in a lump—That will be the best way.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, any thing to accommodate you; they are mine—But there's one portrait you have always passed over.

Care. What, that little ill-looking fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliv. Yes, Sir, 'tis that I mean—but I don't think him so ill-looking a fellow by any means.

Charles. That's the picture of my uncle, Sir Oliver—Before he went abroad it was done, and is esteemed a very great likeness.

Care. That your uncle Sir Oliver! Then in my opinion you never will be friends, for he is one of the most stern-looking rogues I ever beheld, he has an unforgiving eye, and a damn'd disinheriting countenance. Don't you think so, little Premium.

Sir Oliv. Upon my soul I do not, Sir; I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive.——But I suppose your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber.

Charles. No, hang it, the old gentleman has been very good to me, and I'll keep his picture as long as I have a room to put it in.

Sir Oliv. The rogue's my nephew after all——I forgive him every thing. [*Aside.*] But, Sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles. I am sorry for it, Master Broker, for you certainly won't have it.——What the devil, have you not got enough of the family!

Sir Oliv. I forgive him every thing. [*Aside*] Look'ye, Sir, I am a strange sort of a fellow, and when I take a whim in my head I don't value money: I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles. Pry'thee don't be troublesome——I tell you I won't part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir Oliv. How like his father the dog is—I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw so strong a resemblance. [*Aside.*] Well Sir, here's a draught for your sum.

[*Giving a bill.*

Charles. Why, this bill is for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliv. You'll not let Sir Oliver go then.

Charles. No, I tell you once for all.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that some other time—But give me your hand; [*presses it*] you are a damn'd honest fellow Charles,—O Lord! I beg pardon, Sir, for being so free——Come along, Moses.

Charles. But hark'ye, Premium, you'll provide good lodging for these gentlemen. [*Going.*]

Sir Oliv. I'll send for 'em in a day or two.

Charles. And pray let it be a genteel conveyance, for I assure you most of 'em have been used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliv. I will for all but Oliver.

Charles. For all but the honest little Nabob.

Sir Oliv. You are fixed on that.

Charles. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliv. Ah the dear extravagant dog; [*Aside*] Good day, Sir. Come, Moses.—Now let me see who dares call him profligate. [*Exit with Moses.*

Care. Why, Charles, this is the very prince of brokers.

Charles. I wonder where Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow—But, Careless, step into the company; I'll wait on you presently, I see old Rowley coming.

Care. But hark'ye, Charles; don't let that fellow make you part with any of that money to diſcharge muſty old debts. Tradeſmen, you know, are the moſt impertinent people in the world.

Charles. True, and paying them would be the encouraging them.

Care. Well, ſettle your buſineſs, and make what haſte you can.

Charles. Eight hundred pounds! Two thirds of this are mine by right—Five hundred and thirty odd pounds! —Gad, I never knew till now, tha my anceſtors were ſuch valuable acquaintances.——Kind ladies and gentlemen, I am your very much obliged, and moſt grateful humble ſervant. [*Bowing to the Pictures.*]

Enter ROWLEY.

Ah! Rowley, you are juſt come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Rowl. Yes, Sir; I heard they were going.——But how can you ſupport ſuch ſpirits under all your misfortunes?

Charles. That's the cauſe, Maſter Rowley; my misfortunes are ſo many, that I can't afford to part with my ſpirits.

Rowl. And can you really take leave of your anceſtors with ſo much unconcern?

Charles. Unconcern! what, I ſuppoſe you are ſurpriſed that I am not more ſorrowful at loſing the company of ſo many worthy friends. It is very diſtreſſing to be ſure: but you ſee they never move a muſcle, then why the devil ſhould I!

Rowl. Ah, dear Charles!———

Charles. But come, I have no time for trifling;—here, take this bill and get it changed, and carry an hundred pounds to poor Stanley, or we ſhall have ſomebody call that has a better right to it.

Rowl. Ah, Sir, I wiſh you would remember the proverb—

Charles. Be juſt before you are generous.——Why, ſo I would if I could, but juſtice is an old lame, hobling beldam, and I can't get her to keep pace with generoſity for the ſoul of me.

Rowl. Do, dear Sir, reflect.

Charles. That's very true, as you ſay———but, Rowley, while I have, by Heaven's I'll give—ſo damn your morality, and away to old Stanley with the money. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SIR OLIVER *and* MOSES.

Mos. Well, Sir, I think as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in all his glory—'tis a great pity he is so extravagant.

Sir Oliv. True,—but he would not sell my picture.——

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.——

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.—Oh, here comes Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Well, Sir, I find you have made a purchase.

Sir Oliv. Yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowl. And he has commissioned me to return you an hundred pound of the purchase-money, but under your fictitious character of old Stanley. I saw a taylor and two hosiers dancing attendance, who, I know, will go unpaid, and the hundred pounds would just satisfy them.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too.—But now, I'am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, I'm sorry I was not in the way to shew you out. Hark ye, Moses. [*Exit with Moses.*

Sir Oliv. There's a fellow now—Will you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowl. Indeed!

Sir Oliv. And now they are planning an annuity business. —Oh! Master Rowley, in my time servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were wore a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birth-day clothes, with the gloss on. *Exeunt.*

SCENE, *the Apartments of* JOSEPH SURFACE.

Enter JOSEPH *and a* SERVANT.

Jos. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Serv. No, Sir.

Jos. I wonder she did not write if she could not come—I hope Sir Peter does not suspect me——But Charles's dissipation and extravagance are great points in my favour. [*Knocking at the door*] See if it is her.

Serv. 'Tis Lady Teazle, Sir; but she always orders her chair to the millener's in the next street.

Jos. Then draw that screen—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper—You need not wait. [*Exit Servant.*]—My Lady Teazle, I'm afraid, begins to suspect my attachment to Maria; but she must not be acquainted with that secret till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

L. Teaz. What, Sentiment in soliloquy!——Have you been very impatient now?——Nay, you look so grave——I assure you, I came as soon as I could.

Jos. Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy—a very unfashionable custom among ladies.

L. Teaz. Nay, you wrong me; I'm sure you'd pity me if you knew my situation—[*both sit*]—Sir Peter really grows so peevish, and so ill-natured, there's no enduring him; and then, to suspect me with Charles——

Jos. I'm glad my scandalous friends keep up that report. [*Aside.*

L. Teaz. For my part, I wish Sir Peter to let Maria marry him—Won'dn't you Mr. Surface?

Jos. Indeed I would not—[*Aside.*]—Oh, to be sure; and then my dear Lady Teazle would be convinced how groundless her suspicions were, of my having any thoughts of the silly girl.

L. Teaz. Then, there's my friend Lady Sneerwell, has propagated malicious stories about me——and, what's very provoking, all too without the least foundation.

Jos. Ah! there's the mischief—for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there's no comfort like the consciousness of not having deserved it.

L. Teaz. And to be continually censured and suspected, when I know the integrity of my own heart—it would almost prompt me to give him some grounds for it.

Jos. Certainly—for when a husband grows suspicious, and withdraws his confidence from his wife, it then becomes a part of her duty to endeavour to out-wit him.—You owe it to the natural privilege of your sex.

L. Teaz. Indeed!

Joſ. Oh yes; for your huſband ſhould never be deceived in you, and you ought to be frail in compliment to his diſcernment.

L. Teaz. This is the neweſt doctrine.

Joſ. Very wholeſome, believe me.

L. Teaz. So, the only way to prevent his ſuſpicions, is to give him cauſe for them.

Joſ. Certainly.

L. Teaz. But then the conſciouſneſs of my innocence.

Joſ. Ah, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis that conſciouſneſs of your innocence that ruins you. What is it that makes you imprudent in your conduct, and careleſs of the cenſures of the world! The conſciouſneſs of your innocence. What is it that makes you regardleſs of forms, and inattentive to your huſband's peace? Why the conſciouſneſs of your innocence. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you could only be prevailed upon to make a trifling *faux-pas*, you can't imagine how circumſpect you would grow.

L. Teaz. Do you think ſo?

Joſ. Depend upon it.—Your caſe at preſent, my dear Lady Teazle, reſembles that of a perſon in a plethora—you are abſolutely dying of too much health.

L. Teaz. Why, indeed, if my underſtanding could be convinced———

Joſ. Your underſtanding!—Oh yes, your underſtanding *ſhould* be convinced. Heaven forbid that I ſhould perſuade you to any thing you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honour for that.

L. Teaz. Don't you think you may as well leave honour out of the queſtion! [*both riſe.*]

Joſ. Ah! I ſee, Lady Teazle, the effects of your country education ſtill remain.

L. Teaz. They do, indeed—and I begin to find myſelf imprudent; and if I ſhould be brought to act wrong, it would be ſooner from Sir Peter's ill treatment of me, than from your honourable logic, I aſſure you.

Joſ. Then, by this hand, which is unworthy of—[*Kneeling, a ſervant enters*]—What do you want, you ſcoundrel?

Serv. I beg pardon, Sir——I thought you would not chuſe Sir Peter ſhould come up.

Jos. Sir Peter!

L. Teaz. Sir Peter—Oh, I'm undone!——What ſhall I do! Hide me ſomewhere, good Mr. Logic.

Jos. Here, here, behind this ſcreen [*ſhe runs behind the ſcreen*] and now reach me a book. [*Sits down and reads.*

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet.—Ay, there he is, ever improving himſelf.——Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface.

Jos. [*Affecting to gape*] Oh, Sir Peter?—I rejoice to ſee you—I was got over a ſleepy book here—I am vaſty glad to ſee you—I thank you for this call——I believe you have not been here ſince I finiſhed my library—Books, books, you know, are the only thing I am coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. Very pretty, indeed—why, even your ſcreen is a ſource of knowledge—hung round with maps, I ſee.

Jos. Yes, I find great uſe in that ſcreen.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, ſo you muſt when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Yes, or to hide any thing in a hurry. [*Aſide.*

Sir Pet. But, my dear friend, I want to have ſome private talk with you.

Jos. You need not wait. [*Exit. Servant.*

Sir Pet. Pray ſit down—[*both ſit.*]—My dear friend, I want to impart to you ſome of my diſtreſſes—In ſhort, Lady Teazle's behaviour of late has given me very great uneaſineſs. She not only diſſipates and deſtroys my fortune, but I have ſtrong reaſons to believe ſhe has formed an attachment elſewhere.

Jos. I am unhappy to hear it.

Sir Pet. I knew you would ſympathize with me.

Jos. Believe me, Sir Peter, ſuch a diſcovery would affect me——juſt as much as it does you.

Sir Pet. What a happineſs to have a friend we can truſt, even with our family-ſecrets—Can't you gueſs who it is?

Jos. I hav'n't the moſt diſtant idea—It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Sir Pet. No, no.——What do you think of Charles?

Jos. My brother! impoſſible!—I can't think he would be capable of ſuch baſeneſs and ingratitude.

Sir Pet. Ah, the goodneſs of your own mind makes you ſlow to believe ſuch villany.

Joſ. Very true, Sir Peter—The man who is conſcious of the integrity of own heart, is ever ſlow to credit another's baſeneſs.

Sir Pet. And yet, that the ſon of my old friend ſhould practiſe againſt the honour of my family.

Joſ. Ay, there's the caſe, Sir Peter—When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound feels doubly ſmart.

Sir Pet. What noble ſentiments!—He never uſed a ſentiment, ungrateful boy! that I acted as guardian to, and who was brought up under my eye; and I never in my life refuſed him—my advice.

Joſ. I don't know, Sir Peter—he may be ſuch a man—if it be ſo, he is no longer a brother of mine—I renounce him. I diſclaim him—For the man who can break through the laws of hoſpitality, and ſeduce the wife or daughter of his friend, deſerves to be branded as a peſt to ſociety.

Sir Pet. And yet, Joſeph, if I was to make it public, I ſhould only be ſneered and laughed at.

Joſ. Why, that's very true——No, no, you muſt not make it public; people would talk.——

Sir Pet. Talk! they'd ſay it was all my own fault; an old doating batchelor, to marry a young giddy girl. They'd paragraph me in the newſpapers, and make ballads on me.

Joſ. And yet, Sir Peter, I can't think that my Lady Teazle's honour——

Sir Pet. Ah, my dear friend, what's her honour oppoſed againſt the flattery of a handſome young fellow—But, Joſeph, ſhe has been upbraiding me of late, that I have not made her a ſettlement; and, I think, in our laſt quarrel, ſhe told me ſhe ſhould not be very ſorry if I was dead. Now, I have brought draughts of two deeds for your peruſal; and ſhe ſhall find, if I was to die, that I have not been inattentive to her welfare while living. By the one, ſhe will enjoy eight hundred pounds a-year during my life; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Joſ. This conduct is truly generous—I wiſh it mayn't corrupt my pupil. [*Aſide.*

Sir Pet. But I would not have her as yet acquainted with the leaſt mark of my affection.

Joſ. Nor I—if I could help it. [*Aſide.*

Sir Pet. And now I have unburthened myſelf to you, let us talk over your affair with Maria.

Joſ. Not a ſyllable upon the ſubject now. [*Alarmed*] ——Some other time; I am too much affected by your affairs, to think of my own. For the man, who can think of his own happineſs, while his friend is in diſtreſs, deſerves to be hunted as a monſter to ſociety.

Sir Pet. I am ſure of your affection for her.

Joſ. Let me entreat you, Sir Peter——

Sir Pet. And though you are ſo averſe to Lady Teazle's knowing it, I aſſure you ſhe is not your enemy, and I am ſenſibly chagrined you have made no further progreſs.

Joſ. Sir Peter, I muſt not hear you—The man who—[*Enter a ſervant.*] What do you want, Sirrah?

Serv. Your brother, Sir, is at the door talking to a gentleman; he ſays he knows you are at home, that Sir Peter is with you, and he muſt ſee you.

Joſ. I am not at home.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, you ſhall be at home.

Joſ. [*After ſome heſitation*] Very well, let him come up.

Sir Pet. Now, Joſeph, I'll hide myſelf, and do you tax him about the affair with my Lady Teazle, and ſo draw the ſecret from him.

Joſ. O fie, Sir Peter—what, join in a plot to trapan my brother!

Sir Pet. Oh aye, to ſerve your friend; beſides, if he is innocent, as you ſay he is, it will give him an opportunity to clear himſelf, and make me very happy. Hark, I hear him coming—where ſhall I go?—behind this ſcreen——What the devil! here has been one liſtener already, for I'll ſwear I ſaw a petticoat.

Joſ. [*Affecting to laugh*] 'Tis very ridiculous—Ha, ha, ha—a ridiculous affair, indeed—ha, ha, ha—Hark ye, Sir Peter [*pulling him aſide*] though I hold a man of intrigue to be a moſt deſpicable character, yet you know it does not follow, that one is to be an abſolute Joſeph either. Hark ye, 'tis a little French milliner, that calls upon me ſometimes, and hearing you were coming, and having ſome character to loſe, ſhe ſlipped behind the ſcreen.

Sir Pet. A French milliner! [*ſmiling*] cunning rogue!

Joſeph—Sly rogue—But, zounds, ſhe has overheard every thing that has paſſed about my wife.

Joſ. Oh, never fear—Take my word it will never go farther for her.

Sir Pet. Won't it?

Joſ. No, depend upon it.

Sir Pet. Well, well, if it will go no farther——But—where ſhall I hide myſelf?

Joſ. Here, here, ſlip into the cloſet, and you may overhear every word.

L. Teaz. Can I ſteal away [*Peeping.*]

Joſ. Huſh, huſh, don't ſtir.

Sir Pet. Joſeph, tax him home. [*Peeping.*]

Joſ. In, in, my dear Sir Peter.

L. Teaz. Can't you lock the cloſet door?

Joſ. Not a word—you'll be diſcovered.

Sir Pet. Joſeph, don't ſpare him.

Joſ. For Heaven's ſake lie cloſe—A pretty ſituation I am in, to part man and wife in this manner. [*Aſide.*

Sir Pet. You're ſure the little French milliner won't blab.

Enter CHARLES.

Charles. Why, how now, brother, your fellow denied you, they ſaid you were not at home—What, have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Joſ. Neither, brother, neither.

Charles. But where's Sir Peter? I thought he was with you.

Joſ. He was, brother; but hearing you was coming, he left the houſe.

Charles. What, was the old fellow afraid I wanted to borrow money of him!

Joſ. Borrow! no, brother; but I am ſorry to hear you have given that worthy man cauſe for great uneaſineſs.

Charles. Yes, I am told I do that to a great many worthy men—But how do you mean, brother?

Joſ. Why, he thinks you have endeavoured to alienate the affections of Lady Teazle.

Charles. Who, I alienate the affections of Lady Teazle! Upon my word, he accuſes me very unjuſtly. What, has the old gentleman found out that he has got a young wife; or, what is worſe, has the lady found out that ſhe has got an old huſband.

Joſ. For ſhame, brother.

Charles. 'Tis true, I did once ſuſpect her Ladyſhip had a partiality for me, but upon my ſoul I never gave her the leaſt encouragement; for, you know my attachment was to Maria.

Joſ. This will make Sir Peter extremely happy—But if ſhe had a partiality for you, ſure you would not have been baſe enough——

Charles. Why, look'ye, Joſeph, I hope I ſhall never deliberately do a diſhonourable action; but if a pretty woman ſhould purpoſely throw herſelf in my way, and that pretty woman ſhould happen to be married to a man old enough to be her father——

Joſ. What then?

Charles. Why then, I believe I ſhould—have occaſion to borrow a little of your morality, brother.

Joſ. O fie, brother—The man who can jeſt—

Charles. Oh, that's very true, as you were going to obſerve—But, Joſeph, do you know that I am ſurpriſed at your ſuſpecting me with Lady Teazle. I thought you was always the favourite there.

Joſ. Me!

Charles. Why yes, I have ſeen you exchange ſuch ſignificant glances.

Joſ. 'Pſhaw.

Charles. Yes I have; and don't you remember when I came in here, and caught her and you at——

Joſ. I muſt ſtop him. [*Aſide*] [*Stops his mouth*] Sir Peter has overheard every word that you have ſaid.

Charles. Sir Peter! where is he!—What, in the cloſet,—'Foregad I'll have him out.

Joſ. No, no [*Stopping him.*]

Charles. I will—Sir Peter Teazle come into court.

Enter Sir PETER.

What, my old guardian turn'd inquiſitor, and take evidence incog.

Sir Pet. Give me your hand—I own, my dear boy, I have ſuſpected you wrongfully; but you muſt not be angry with Joſeph, it was all my plot, and I ſhall think of you, as long as I live for what I overheard.

Charles. Then 'tis well you did not hear more. Is it not Joſeph?

Sir Pet. What, you would have retorted on Joſeph, would you?

Charles. And yet you might as well have ſuſpected him as me, might he not, Joſeph?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. [*Whiſpering Joſeph.*] Lady Sneerwell, Sir, is juſt coming up, and ſays ſhe muſt ſee you.

Joſ. Gentlemen, I muſt beg your pardon; I have company waiting for me; give me leave to conduct you down ſtairs.

Charles. No, no, ſpeak to them in another room; I have not ſeen Sir Peter a great while, and I want to talk with him.

Joſ. Well, I'll ſend away the perſon and return immediately. Sir Peter, not a word of the little French milliner.

[*Aſide and exit.*]

Sir Pet. Ah, Charles, what a pity it is you don't aſſociate more with your brother, we then might have ſome hopes of your reformation; he's a young man of ſuch ſentiments—Ah, there's nothing in the world ſo noble as a man of ſentiment.

Charles. Oh, he's too moral by half; and ſo apprehenſive of his good name, that, I dare ſay, he would as ſoon let a prieſt into his houſe, as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no, you accuſe him wrongfully——Though Joſeph is no rake, he is no ſaint.

Charles. Oh! a perfect anchorite—a young hermit.

Sir Pet. Huſh, huſh; don't abuſe him, or he may chance to hear of it again.

Charles. Why, you won't tell him, will you?

Sir Pet. No, no, but—I have a great mind to tell him. [*Aſide*] [*ſeems to heſitate*]—Hark'ye, Charles, have you a mind for a laugh at Joſeph?

Charles. I ſhould like it of all things——let's have it.

Sir Pet. Gad I'll tell him——I'll be even with Joſeph for diſcovering me in the cloſet——[*Aſide*]——Hark'ye, Charles, he had a girl with him when I called.

Charles. Who, Joſeph! impoſſible!

Sir Pet. Yes, a little French milliner [*takes him to the front*]—and the beſt of the joke is, ſhe is now in the room.

Charles. The devil ſhe is!—Where?

Sir Pet. Huſh, huſh—behind the ſcreen.

Charles. I'll have her out.

Sir Pet. No, no, no.

Charles. Yes.

Sir Pet. No.

Charles. By the Lord I will—So now for it. [*Both run up to the ſcreen—The ſcreen falls at the ſame time.*]

JOSEPH *Enters.*

Charles. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's horrible!

Charles. Sir Peter, this is the ſmarteſt little French milliner I ever ſaw—But pray what is the meaning of all this? You ſeem to have been playing at hide and ſeek here, and for my part, I don't know who's in or who's out of the ſecret—Madam, will you pleaſe to explain?—Not a word!—Brother, is it your pleaſure to illuſtrate?—Morality dumb too!—Well, though I can make nothing of it, I ſuppoſe you perfectly underſtand one another, good folks, and ſo I'll leave you. Brother, I am ſorry you have given that worthy man ſo much cauſe for uneaſineſs—Sir Peter, there's nothing in the world ſo noble as a man of ſentiment—Ha, ha, ha. [*Exit.*

Joſ. Sir Peter, notwithſtanding appearances are againſt me—if—if you'll give me leave—I'll explain every thing to your ſatisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you pleaſe, Sir.

Joſ. Lady Teazle knowing my—Lady Teazle—I ſay—knowing my pretenſions—to your ward Maria—and Lady Teazle—I ſay—knowing the jealouſy of my—of your temper—ſhe called in here—in order that ſhe—that I——might explain—what theſe pretenſions were—And—hearing you were coming—and—as I ſaid before—knowing the jealouſy of your temper—ſhe—my Lady Teazle—I ſay, went behind the ſcreen—and—This is a full and clear account of the whole affair.

Sir Pet. A very clear account truly! and I dare ſay the Lady will avouch for the truth of every word of it.

L. Teaz. [*advancing*] For not one ſyllable, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. What the devil! don't you think it worth your while to agree in the lie.

L. Teaz. There's not one word of truth in what that gentleman has been ſaying.

Joſ. Zounds, madam, you won't ruin me.

L. Teaz. Stand out of the way, Mr. Hypocrite, I'll ſpeak for myſelf.

Sir Pet. Ay, ay—let her alone—ſhe'll make a better ſtory of it than you did.

L. Teaz. I came here with no intention of liſtening to his addreſſes to Maria, and even ignorant of his pretenſions; but ſeduced by his inſiduous arts, at leaſt to liſten to his addreſſes, if not to ſacrifice his honour, as well as my own, to his unwarrantable deſires.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming indeed.

Joſ. What, is the woman mad?

L. Teaz. No, Sir, ſhe has recovered her ſenſes. Sir Peter, I cannot expect you'll credit me; but the tenderneſs you expreſſed for me, when I am certain you did not know I was within hearing, has penetrated ſo deep into my ſoul, that could I have eſcaped the mortification of this diſcovery, my future life ſhould have convinced you of my ſincere repentance. As for that ſmooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have ſeduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he pretended an honourable paſſion for his ward, I now view him in ſo deſpicable a light, that I ſhall never again reſpect myſelf for having liſtened to his addreſſes. [*Exit.*

Joſ. Sir Peter—Notwithſtanding all this—Heaven is my witneſs——.

Sir Pet. That you are a villain—and ſo I'll leave you to your meditations——

Joſ. Nay, Sir Peter, you muſt not leave me—The man who ſhuts his ears againſt conviction——

Sir Pet. Oh damn your ſentiments—damn your ſentiments— [*Exit, Joſeph following.*

ACT V.

SCENE, JOSEPH SURFACE'S *Apartments.*

Enter JOSEPH *and a* SERVANT.

JOSEPH.

MR. Stanley!—why ſhould you think I would ſee Mr. Stanley! you know well enough he comes entreating for ſomething.

Serv. They let him in before I knew of it; and old Rowley is with him.

Joſ. 'Pſhaw, you blockhead; I am ſo diſtracted with my own misfortunes, I am not in a humour to ſpeak to any one—but ſhew the fellow up. [*Exit Servant.*] Sure fortune never played a man of my policy ſuch a trick before—My character ruined with Sir Peter—my hopes of Maria loſt—I'm in a pretty humour to liſten to poor relations truly—I ſhan't be able to beſtow even a benevolent ſentiment on old Stanley. Oh, here he comes; I'll retire, and endeavour to put a little charity in my face however. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR OLIVER *and* ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. What, does he avoid us? That was him, was it not?

Rowl. Yes, Sir; but his nerves are too weak to bear the ſight of a poor relation; I ſhould have come firſt to break the matter to him.

Sir Oliv. A plague of his nerves—yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of a moſt benevolent way of thinking.

Rowl. Yes—he has as much ſpeculative benevolence as any man in the kingdom, though he is not ſo ſenſual as to indulge himſelf in the exerciſe of it.

Sir Oliv. Yet he has a ſtring of ſentiments, I ſuppoſe, at his fingers ends.

Rowl. And his favourite one is, *That charity begins at home.*

Sir Oliv. And his, I preſume, is of that domeſtic ſort, which never ſtirs abroad at all.

Rowl. Well, Sir, I'll leave you to introduce yourſelf as Old Stanley; I muſt be here again to announce you in your real character.

Sir Oliv. True—and you'll afterwards meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowl. Without loſing a moment. [*Exit Rowley.*

Sir Oliv. Here he comes—I don't like the complaiſance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH.

Joſ. Sir, your moſt obedient; I beg pardon for keeping you a moment—Mr. Stanley, I preſume.

Sir Oliv. At your ſervice, Sir.

Joſ. Pray, be ſeated, Mr. Stanley, I entreat you, Sir.

Sir Oliv. Dear Sir, there's no occaſion. Too ceremonious by half. [*Aſide.*

Joſ. Though I have not the pleaſure of your acquaintance, I am very glad to ſee you look ſo well.—I think, Mr. Stanley, you was nearly related to my mother.

Sir Oliv. I was, Sir; ſo nearly, that my preſent poverty, I fear, may do diſcredit to her wealthy children; elſe I would not preſume to trouble you now.

Joſ. Ah, Sir, don't mention that—For the man who is in diſtreſs has ever a right to claim kindred with the wealthy; I am ſure I wiſh I was of that number, or that it was in my power to afford you even a ſmall relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle Sir Oliver was here, I ſhould have a friend.

Joſ. I wiſh he was, Sir, you ſhould not want an advocate with him, believe me.

Sir Oliv. I ſhould not need one, my diſtreſſes would recommend me. But I imagine his bounty had enabled you to be the agent of his charities.

Joſ. Ah, Sir, you are miſtaken; avarice, avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age; true, it has been ſpread abroad that he has been very bountiful to me, but without the leaſt foundation, though I never choſe to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. And has he never remitted you bullion, rupees, or pagodas?

Joſ. Oh, dear Sir, no ſuch thing. I have indeed received ſome trifling preſents from him, ſuch as ſhawls, avadavits, and Indian crackers; nothing more, Sir.

Sir Oliv. There's gratitude for twelve thouſand pounds! [*Aſide*] Shawls, avadavits and Indian crackers?

Joſ. Then there's my brother, Mr. Stanley, one would ſcarce believe what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliv. Not I for one. [*Aſide.*

Joſ. Oh, the ſums I have lent him!——Well, 'twas an amiable weakneſs——I muſt own I can't defend it, tho' it appears more blameable at preſent, as it prevents me from ſerving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir Oliv. Diſſembler—[*Aſide*]—then you cannot aſſiſt me.

Joſ. I am very unhappy to ſay 'tis not in my power at preſent; but you may depend upon hearing from me when I can be of any Service to you.

Sir Oliv. Sweet Sir, you are too good.

Joſ. Not at all, Sir, to pity without the power to relieve

is ſtill more painful, than to aſk and be denied. Indeed, Mr. Stanley, you leave me deeply affected. Sir, your moſt devoted; I wiſh you health and ſpirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual [*bowing low*] humble ſervant.

Joſ. I am extremely ſorry, Sir, for your misfortunes—Here, open the door——Mr. Stanley, your moſt devoted.

Sir Oliv. Your moſt obliged ſervant. Charles, you are my heir. [*Aſide and Exit.*

Joſ. This is another of the evils that attend a man having ſo good a character—it ſubjects him to the importunity of the neceſſitous——the pure and ſterling ore of charity, is a very expenſive article in the catalogue of a man's virtues; whereas the ſentimental French plate I uſe anſwers the purpoſe full as well, and pays no tax. [*Going.*

Enter ROWLEY.

Rowl. Mr. Surface, your moſt obedient; I wait on you from your uncle who is juſt arrived. [*Gives him a note.*

Joſ. How! Sir Oliver arrived!——Here, Mr.—— call back Mr. Stanley.

Rowl. 'Tis too late, Sir, I met him going out of the houſe.

Joſ. Was ever any thing ſo unfortunate? [*Aſide*]——I hope my uncle has enjoyed good health and ſpirits.

Rowl. Oh, very good, Sir; he bid me inform you he'll wait on you within this half hour.

Joſ. Preſent him my kind love and duty, and aſſure him I'm quite impatient to ſee him. [*Bowing.*]

Rowl. I ſhall, Sir. [*Exit Rowley.*

Joſ. Pray do, Sir [*bows*]—This was the moſt curſed piece of ill luck. [*Exit Joſeph.*

SCENE, *Sir* PETER TEAZLE'*s Houſe.*

Enter Mrs. CANDOUR *and* MAID.

Maid. Indeed, madam, my lady will ſee no one at preſent.

Mrs. Cand. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. I did, madam, and ſhe begs to be excuſed.

Mrs. Cand. Go again, for I am ſure ſhe muſt be greatly

diſtreſſed. [*Exit Maid*] How provoking to be kept waiting —I am not miſtreſs of half the circumſtances:—I ſhall have the whole affair in the newſpapers, with the parties names at full length, before I have dropped the ſtory at a dozen houſes.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Mrs. Cand. Oh, Sir Benjamin, I am glad you are come; have you heard of Lady Teazle's affair?——Well, I never was ſo ſurprized—and I am ſo diſtreſſed for the parties.

Sir Benj. Nay, I can't ſay I pity Sir Peter, he was always ſo partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Cand. Mr. Surface! Why it was Charles.

Sir Benj. Oh, no, madam, Mr. Surface was the gallant.

Mrs. Cand. No, Charles was the lover; and Mr. Surface, to do him juſtice, was the cauſe of the diſcovery: he brought Sir Peter; and———

Sir Benj. Oh, my dear madam, no ſuch thing; for I had it from one——

Mrs. Cand. Yes, and I had it from one, that had it from one that knew——

Sir Benj. And I had it from one—

Mrs. Cand. No ſuch thing—but here comes my Lady Sneerwell, and perhaps ſhe might have heard the particulars.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Oh, dear Mrs. Candour, here's a ſad affair about our friend Lady Teazle!

Mrs. Cand. Why, to be ſure, poor thing, I am much concerned for her.

L. Sneer. I proteſt ſo am I—though I muſt confeſs ſhe was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Cand. But ſhe had a great deal of good nature.

Sir Benj. And had a very ready wit.

Mrs. Cand. But do you know all the particulars. [*To Lady Sneerwell,*]

Sir Benj. Yet who could have ſuſpected Mr. Surface!

Mrs. Cand. Charles you mean.

Sir Benj. No, Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Cand. Oh, 'twas Charles.

L. Sneer. Charles!

Mrs. Cand. Yes, Charles.

Sir Benj. I'll not pretend to diſpute with you, Mrs. Candour; but be as it may, I hope Sir Peter's wounds won't prove mortal.

Mrs. Cand. Sir Peter's wounds! what! did they fight! I never heard a word of that.

Sir Benj. No!———

Mrs. Cand. No———

L. Sneer. Nor I a ſyllable: Do, dear Sir Benjamin, tell us.

Sir. Benj. Oh, my dear madam, then you don't know half the affair—Why—why—I'll tell you—Sir Peter you muſt know, had a long time ſuſpected Lady Teazle's viſits to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Cand. To Charles you mean.

Sir Benj. No, Mr. Surface,—and upon going to his houſe, and finding Lady Teazle there, Sir, ſays Sir Peter, you are a very ungrateful fellow.

Mrs. Cand. Ay, that was Charles.

Sir Benj. Mr. Surface.—And old as I am, ſays he, I demand immediate ſatisfaction: Upon this, they both drew their ſwords, and to it they fell.

Mrs. Cand. That muſt be Charles: for it is very unlikely that Mr. Surface ſhould fight him in his own houſe.

Sir Benj. 'Sdeath, madam, not at all. Lady Teazle, upon ſeeing Sir Peter in ſuch danger, ran out of the room in ſtrong hyſterics, and was followed by Charles, calling out for hartſhorn and water. They fought, and Sir Peter received a wound in his right-ſide by the thurſt of a ſmall ſword.

Enter CRABTREE.

Crab. Piſtols! piſtols! nephew.

Mrs. Cand. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, I am glad you are come; now we ſhall have the whole affair.

Sir Benj. No, no, it was a ſmall ſword, uncle.

Crab. Zounds, nephew, I ſay it was a piſtol.

Sir Benj. A thurſt in ſecond through the ſmall guts.

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax.

Sir Benj. But give me leave, dear uncle, it was a ſmall ſword.

Crab. I tell you it was a piſtol—Won't you ſuffer any body to know any thing but yourſelf.——It was a piſtol, and Charles.———

Mrs. Cand. Ay! I knew it was Charles.

Sir Benj. Mr. Surface, uncle.

Crab. Why zounds! I ſay it was Charles; muſt nobody ſpeak but yourſelf, I'll tell you how the whole affair was.

L. Sneer. } Ay do, do, pray tell us.
Mrs. Cand. }

Sir Benj. I ſee my uncle knows nothing at all about the matter.

Crab. Mr. Surface you muſt know, ladies, came late from Salthill, where he had been the evening before with a particular friend of his, who has a ſon at Eton; his piſtols were left on the bureau, and unfortunately loaded, and on Sir Peter's taxing Charles——

Sir Benj. Mr. Surface you mean.

Crab. Do pray, nephew, hold your tongue, and let me ſpeak ſometimes—I ſay, ladies, upon his taking Charles to account, and taxing him with the baſeſt ingratitude——

Sir Benj. Ay, ladies I told you Sir Peter taxed him with ingratitude.

Crab. They agreed each to take a piſtol—They fired at the ſame inſtant——Charles's ball took place, and lodged in the thorax. Sir Peter's miſſed, and what is very extraordinary, the ball grazed againſt a little bronze Shakeſpear that ſtood over the chimney, flew off through the window, at right angles, and wounded the poſtman, who was juſt come to the door with a double letter from Northamptonſhire.

Sir Benj. I heard nothing of all this! I muſt own, ladies, my uncle's account is more circumſtantial, though I believe mine is the true one.

L. Sneer. I am more intereſted in this affair than they imagine, and muſt have better information. [*Aſide and Exit.*

Sir Benj. Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very eaſily accounted for.

Crab. Why, Yes; they do ſay—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Cand. But pray where is Sir Peter now! I hope his wound won't prove mortal.

Crab. He was carried home immediately, and has given poſitive orders to be denied to every body.

Sir Benj. And I believe Lady Teazle is attending him.

Mrs. Cand. I do believe ſo to.

Crab. Certainly, I met one of the faculty as I came in.

Sir Benj. Gad ſo! and here he comes.

Crab. Yes, yes, that's the doctor.

Mrs. Cand. That certainly muſt be the phyſician.—Now we ſhall get information.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

Dear Doctor, how is your patient?

Sir Benj. I hope his wounds are not mortal.

Crab. Is he in a fair way of recovery?

Sir Benj. Pray, Doctor, was he not wounded by a thruſt of a ſword through the ſmall guts?

Crab. Was it not by a bullet that lodged in the thorax?

Sir Benj. Nay, pray anſwer me.

Crab. Dear, dear Doctor ſpeak. [*All pulling him.*

Sir Oliv. Hey, hey, good people, are you all mad?—Why, what the devil is the matter?—a ſword through the ſmall guts, and a bullet lodged in the thorax? What would you all be at?

Sir Benj. Then perhaps, Sir, you are not a Doctor.

Sir Oliv. If I am, Sir, I am to thank you for my degree.

Crab. Only a particular friend, I ſuppoſe.

Sir Oliv. Nothing more, Sir.

Sir Benj. Then I ſuppoſe, as you are a friend, you can be better able to give us ſome account of his wounds.

Sir Oliv. Wounds!

Mrs. Cand. What! hav'n't you heard he was wounded—The ſaddeſt accident!

Sir Benj. A thruſt with a ſword through the ſmall guts.

Crab. A bullet in the thorax.

Sir Oliv. Good people, ſpeak one at a time, I beſeech you—You both agree that Sir Peter is dangerouſly wounded.

Crab. } Ay, ay, we both agree in that.
Sir Benj. }

Sir Oliv. Then I will be bold to ſay, Sir Peter is one of the moſt imprudent men in the world, for here he comes walking as if nothing had happened.

Enter SIR PETER.

My good friend, you are certainly mad to walk about in this condition; you ſhould go to-bed, you that have had a ſword through your ſmall guts, and a bullet lodged in your thorax.

Sir Pet. A ſword through my ſmall guts, and a bullet lodged in my thorax!

Sir Oliv. Yes theſe worthy people would have killed you without law or phyſic, and wanted to dub me a Doctor, in order to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. What is all this?

Sir Benj. Sir Peter, we are very glad to find the ſtory of the duel is not true.

Crab. And exceedingly ſorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir Pet. So, ſo, all over the town already. [*Aſide.*

Mrs. Cand. Though, as Sir Peter was ſo good a huſband, I pity him ſincerely.

Sir Pet. Plague of your pity.

Crab. As you continued ſo long a batchelor, you was certainly to blame to marry at all.

Sir Pet. Sir, I deſire you'll conſider this is my own houſe.

Sir Benj. However, you muſt not be offended at the jeſts you'll meet on this occaſion.

Crab. It is no uncommon caſe, that's one thing.

Sir Pet. I inſiſt upon being maſter here; in plain terms I deſire you'll leave my houſe immediately.

Mrs. Cand. Well, well, Sir, we are going, and you may depend upon it, we ſhall make the beſt of the ſtory. [*Exit.*

Sir Benj. And tell how badly you have been treated.

Sir Pet. Leave my houſe directly. [*Exit Sir Benjamin.*

Crab. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit Crabtree.*

Sir Pet. Leave my houſe, I ſay—Fiends, furies, there is no bearing of it.

Enter ROWLEY.

Sir Oliv. Well, Sir Peter, I have ſeen my nephews.

Rowl. And Sir Oliver is convinced your judgment is right after all.

Sir Oliv. Ay, Joſeph is the man.

Rowl. Such ſentiments!

Sir. Oliv. And acts up to the ſentiments he profeſſes.

Rowl. Oh, 'tis edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. He is a pattern for the young men of the age—But how comes it, Sir Peter, that you don't join in his praiſes?

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damn'd wicked world, and the fewer we praiſe the better.

Sir Oliv. Right, right, my old friend—But was you always ſo moderate in your judgment.

Rowl. Do you ſay ſo, Sir Peter, you who was never miſtaken in your life.

Sir Pet. Oh, the plague of your jokes—I ſuppoſe you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Rowl. I am indeed, Sir—I met Lady Teazle returning from Mr. Surface's, ſo humbled, that ſhe deign'd to beg even me to become her advocate.

Sir Pet. What! does Sir Oliver know it too?

Sir Oliv. Ay, ay, every circumſtance.

Sir Pet. What! about the cloſet and the ſcreen?

Sir Oliv. Yes, and the little French milliner too. I never laughed more in my life.

Sir Pet. And a very pleaſant jeſt it was.

Sir Oliv. This is your man of ſentiments, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Oh, damn his ſentiments.

Sir Oliv. You muſt have made a pretty appearance when Charles dragged you out of the cloſet.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, that was very diverting.

Sir Oliv. And egad, Sir Peter, I ſhould like to have ſeen your face when the ſcreen was thrown down.

Sir Pet. My face when the ſcreen was thrown down!—Oh yes!—There's no bearing this. [*Aſide.*

Sir Oliv. Come, come, my old friend, don't be vexed, for I can't help laughing for the ſoul of me. Ha, ha, ha.

Sir Pet. Oh, laugh on—I am not vexed—no, no; it is the pleaſanteſt thing in the world. To be the ſtanding jeſt of all one's acquaintance, 'tis the happieſt ſituation imaginable.

Rowl. See, Sir, yonder's my Lady Teazle coming this way, and in tears; let me beg of you to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll leave Rowley to mediate between you, and take my leave; but you muſt make haſte after me to Mr. Surface's, where I go, if not to reclaim a libertine, at leaſt to expoſe hypocriſy. [*Exit.*

Sir Pet. I'll be with you at the diſcovery; I ſhould like to ſee it, though it is a vile unlucky place for diſcoveries. Rowley [*looking out*] ſhe's not coming this way.

Rowl. No, Sir, but ſhe has left the room-door open, and waits your coming.

Sir Pet. Well, certainly mortification is very becoming in a wife—Don't you think I had beſt let her pine a little longer?

Rowl. Oh, Sir, that's being too ſevere.

Sir Pet. I don't think ſo; the letter I found from Charles was evidently intended for her.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter, you are much miſtaken.

Sir Pet. If I was convinced of that——ſee, Maſter Rowley, ſhe looks this way,—what a remarkable elegant turn of the head ſhe has——I have a good mind to go to her.

Rowl. Do, dear Sir.

Sir Pet. But when it is known that we are reconciled, I ſhall be laughed at more than ever.

Rowl. Let them laugh on, and retort their malice upon themſelves, by ſhewing them you can be happy in ſpite of their ſlander.

Sir Pet. Faith, and ſo I will, Maſter Rowley, and my Lady Teazle and I may ſtill be the happieſt couple in the country.

Rowl. O fie, Sir Peter, he that lays aſide ſuſpicion—

Sir Pet. My dear Rowley, if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a ſentiment again; I have had enough of that to laſt the remainder of my life. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, JOSEPH'S *Library.*

Enter JOSEPH *and* LADY SNEERWELL.

L. Sneer. Impoſſible! will not Sir Peter be immediately reconciled to Charles, and no longer oppoſe his union to Maria!

Joſ. Can paſſion mend it?

L. Sneer. No, nor cunning neither. I was a fool to league with ſuch a blunderer.

Joſ. Sure, my Lady Sneerwell, I am the greateſt ſufferer in this affair, and yet, you ſee, I bear it with calmneſs.

L. Sneer. Becauſe the diſappointment does not reach your heart; your intereſt was only concerned.—Had you felt for Maria what I do for that unfortunate libertine, your brother, you would not be diſſuaded from taking every revenge in your power.

Joſ. Why will you rail at me for the diſappointment,

L. Sneer. Are you not the cauſe? Had you not a ſufficient field for your roguery in impoſing upon Sir Peter, and ſupplanting your brother, but you muſt endeavour to ſeduce his wife. I hate ſuch an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never proſpers.

Joſ. Well, I own I am to blame——I have deviated from the direct rule of wrong. Yet I cannot think circumſtances are ſo bad as your Ladyſhip apprehends.

L. Sneer. No!

Joſ. You tell me you have made another trial of Snake, that he ſtill proves ſteady to our intereſt, and that he is ready, if occaſion requires, to ſwear to a contract having paſſed between Charles and your Ladyſhip.

L. Sneer. And what then?

Joſ. Why, the letters which have been ſo carefully circulated will corroborate his evidence, and prove the truth of the aſſertion. But I expect my uncle every moment, and muſt beg your Ladyſhip to retire into the next room.

Lady Sneer. But if he ſhould find me out.

Joſ. I have no fear of that—Sir Peter won't tell for his own ſake, and I ſhall ſoon find out Sir Oliver's weak ſide.

L. Sneer. Nay, I have no doubt of your abilities, only be conſtant to one villany at a time.

Joſ. Well, I will, I will.—[*Exit Lady Sneerwell*]—— It is confounded hard though, to be baited by one's confederates in wickedneſs—[*knocking*]—Who have we got here? My uncle Oliver, I ſuppoſe—Oh, old Stanley again! How came he here? He muſt not ſtay——

Enter SIR OLIVER.

I told you already, Mr. Stanley, that it was not in my power to relieve you.

Sir Oliv. But I hear, Sir, that Sir Oliver is arrived; and perhaps he might——

Joſ. Well, Sir; you cannot ſtay now, Sir; but any other time, Sir, you ſhall certainly be relieved.

Sir Oliv. Oh, Sir Oliver and I muſt be acquainted.

Joſ. I muſt inſiſt upon your going. Indeed, Mr. Stanley, you can't ſtay.

Sir Oliv. Poſitively I muſt ſee Sir Oliver.

Joſ. Then poſitively you ſha'n't ſtay. [*Puſhing him out.*

Enter CHARLES.

Charles. Hey dey! what's the matter? Why, who the devil have we got here! What, my little Premium. Oh, brother, you muſt not hurt my little broker. But hark'ye, Joſeph; what, have you been borrowing money too?

Joſ. Borrowing money! No, brother—We expect my uncle Oliver here every minute, and Mr. Stanley inſiſt upon ſeeing him

Charles. Stanley! Why his name is Premium.

Joſ. No, no! I tell you again his name is Stanley.

Charles. But I tell you again his name is Premium.

Joſ. It don't ſignify what his name is.

Charles. No more it don't, as you ſay, brother; for I ſuppoſe he goes by half an hundred names, beſides A. B. at the coffee-houſes. But old Noll muſt not come and catch my little broker here neither.

Joſ. Mr. Stanley, I beg———

Charles. And I beg, Mr. Premium———

Joſ. You muſt go indeed, Mr. Stanley.

Charles. Ay, you muſt go, Mr. Premium.

[*Both puſhing him.*

Enter Sir PETER, *Lady* TEAZLE, MARIA, *and* ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. What, my old friend, Sir Oliver! what's the matter?——In the name of wonder were there ever two ſuch ungracious nephews, to aſſault their uncle at his firſt viſit.

L. Teaz. On my word, Sir, it was well we came to your relief.

Joſ. Charles!

Charles. Joſeph!

Joſ. Now our ruin is complete.

Charles. Very.

Sir Pet. You find, Sir Oliver, your neceſſitous character of old Stanley could not protect you.

Sir Oliv. No! nor Premium neither. The neceſſities of the former could not extract a ſhilling from that benevolent gentleman there; and with the other I ſtood a worſe chance than my anceſtors, and had like to have been knocked down without being bid for. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, look upon this elder nephew of mine; you both know what

I have done for him, and how gladly I would have looked upon half my fortune as held only in trust for him. Judge then, of my surprize and disappointment, at finding him destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude!

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be as much surprised as you, if I did not know him to be artful, selfish, and hypocritical.

L. Teaz. And if he pleads not guilty to all this, let him call on me to finish his character.

Sir Pet. Then I believe we need not add more; for if he knows himself, it will be a sufficient punishment for him that he is known by the world.

Charles. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me by and by. [*Aside.*

Sir Oliv. As for that profligate there——

[*Pointing to Charles.*

Charles. Ay, now comes my turn: the damn'd family pictures will ruin me. [*Aside.*

Jos. Sir Oliver, will you honour me with a hearing?

Charles. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I should have time to recollect myself. [*Aside.*

Sir Pet. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Jos. I trust I could, Sir.

Sir Oliv. Pshaw! [*turns away from him*] and I suppose you could justify yourself too. [*To Charles.*

Charles. Not that I know of, Sir.

Sir Oliv. What, my little Premium was let too much into the secret.

Charles. Why yes, Sir, but they were family secrets, and should go no further.

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Oliver, I am sure you cannot look upon Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. No, nor with gravity neither—Do you know, Sir Peter, the young rogue has been selling me his ancestors. I have bought judges and staff-officers by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as old china.

[*During this speech Charles laughs behind his hat.*]

Charles. Why, that I have made free with the family-canvas is true; my ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me when I tell you (and upon my soul I would not say it if it was not so) if I don't

appear mortified at the expoſure of my follies, it is, becauſe I feel at this moment the warmeſt ſatisfaction, at ſeeing you, my liberal benefactor. [*Embraces him.*

Sir Oliver. Charles, I forgive you; give me your hand again; the little ill-looking fellow over the ſettee has made your peace for you.

Charles. Then, Sir, my gratitude to the original is ſtill increaſed.

L. Teaz. Sir Oliver, here is another, with whom I dare ſay Charles is no leſs anxious to be reconciled.

Sir Oliv. I have heard of that attachment before, and with the Lady's leave—if I conſtrue right, that bluſh——

Sir Pet. Well, child, ſpeak for yourſelf.

Mar. I have little more to ſay, than that I wiſh him happy, and for any influence I might once have had over his affections, I moſt willingly reſign them to one who has a better claim to them.

Sir Pet. Hey! what's the matter now? While he was a rake and a profligate, you would hear of no body elſe; and now that he's likely to reform, you won't have him. What's the meaning of all this?

Mar. His own heart, and Lady Sneerwell, can beſt inform you.

Charles. Lady Sneerwell!

Joſ. I am very ſorry, brother, I am obliged to ſpeak to this point, but juſtice demands it from me; and Lady Sneerwell's wrongs can no longer be concealed.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

Sir Pet. Another French milliner! I believe he has one in every room in the houſe.

L. Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! well you may ſeem confounded and ſurpriſed at the indelicate ſituation to which your perfidy has reduced me.

Charles. Pray, uncle, is this another of your plots! for, as I live, this is the firſt time I ever heard of it.

Joſ. There is but one witneſs, I believe, neceſſary for the buſineſs.

Sir Pet. And that witneſs is Mr. Snake—you were perfectly in the right in bringing him with you. Let him appear.

Rowl. Deſire Mr. Snake to walk in.—It is rather un-

luckly, Madam, that he ſhould be brought to confront and not ſupport your Ladyſhip.

Enter SNAKE.

L. Sneer. I am ſurprized! what, ſpeak villain! have you too conſpired againſt me!

Snake. I beg your Ladyſhip ten thouſands pardons; I muſt own you paid me very liberally for the lying queſtions, but I have unfortunately been offered double for ſpeaking the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counter-plot—I give your Ladyſhip much joy of your negociation.

Lady Sneer. May the torments of deſpair and diſappointment light upon you all! [*Going.*

L. Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, give me leave to return you thanks, for the trouble you and this gentleman took, in writing letters in my name to Charles, and anſwering them yourſelf;—and, at the ſame time, I muſt beg you will preſent my compliments to the ſcandalous college, of which you are preſident, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, returns the diploma they granted her, as ſhe leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

L. Sneer. You too Madam! Provoking, inſolent!——may your huſband live theſe fifty years. [*Exit.*

L. Teaz. O Lord——what a malicious creature it is!

Sir Pet. Not for her laſt wiſh I hope.

L. Teaz. Oh, no, no.

Sir Pet. Well, Sir——what have you to ſay for yourſelf. [*To Joſeph.*

Joſ. Sir, I am ſo confounded that Lady Sneerwell ſhould impoſe upon us all, by ſuborning Mr. Snake, that I know not what to ſay—but—leſt her malice ſhould prompt her to injure my brother— I had better follow her [*Exit.*

Sir Pet. Moral to the laſt.

Sir Oliv. Marry her, Joſeph, marry her if you can——Oil and vinegar—you'll do very well together.

Rowl. Mr. Snake, I believe we have no further occaſion for you.

Snake. Before I go, I muſt beg pardon of theſe good ladies and gentleman, for whatever trouble I have been the humble inſtrument of cauſing.

Sir Pet. You have made amends by your open confeſſion.

Snake But I muſt beg it as a favour that it may never be ſpoken of.

Sir. Pet. What! are you aſhamed of having done one good action in your life.

Snake. Sir, I requeſt you to conſider that I live by the badneſs of my character, and if it was once known that I had been betrayed into an honeſt action I ſhould loſe every friend I have in the world. [*Exit.*

Sir Oliv. Never fear, we ſha'n't traduce you by ſaying any thing in your praiſe.

Sir Pet. There's a ſpecious rogue for you.

L. Teaz. You ſee, Sir Oliver, it needed no great perſuaſion to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. So much the better; I'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Sir Pet. What, before you aſk the girl's conſent.

Charles. I have done that a long time ſince———above a minute ago———and ſhe look'd———

Mar. O fie, Charles—I proteſt, Sir Peter, there has not been a word ſaid.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, the leſs the better [*joining their hands*] there—and may your love never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together, as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Charles. I ſuſpect, Rowley, I owe much to you.

Sir Oliv. You do indeed.

Rowl. Sir, if I had failed in my endeavours to ſerve you, you would have been indebted to me for the attempt. But deſerve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Pet. Ay, honeſt Rowley always ſaid you would reform.

Charles. Look ye, Sir Peter, as to reforming, I ſhall make no promiſes, and that I take to be ſtrongeſt proof that I intend ſetting about it. But here ſhall be my monitor, my gentle guide——can I leave the virtuous path thoſe eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, ſhould'ſt wave thy beauty's ſway,
Thou ſtill muſt rule, becauſe I will obey;
An humble fugitive from folly view,
No ſanctuary near but love——and you.
You can indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even ſcandal dies—if you approve.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

A School for Scandal!—Tell me, I beſeech you,
Needs there a ſchool, this modiſh art to teach you?
No need of leſſons now—the knowing think——
We might as well be taught to eat and drink:
Caus'd by a dearth of ſcandal, ſhould the vapours
Diſtreſs our fair ones, let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures ſuch diſorders hit,
Crave what they will, there's quantum ſufficit.
"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood, (who loves tattle,
And puts ſuch ſalt and pepper in her prattle)
Juſt riſen at noon, all night at cards, when threſhing
"Give me the papers, Liſp—how bold and free! (ſips)
"Laſt night Lord L. (ſips) was caught with Lady D.
"For aching heads, what charming ſal volatile! (ſips)
"If Mrs. B. will ſtill continue flirting
"We hope ſhe'll draw or we'll undraw the curtain,—
"Fine ſatyr, poz! in public all abuſe it;
"But, by ourſelves (ſips) our praiſe we can't refuſe it.
"Now, Liſp, read you—there at that daſh and ſtar——
"Yes ma'am——A certain Lord had beſt beware,
"Who lives not twenty miles from Groſvenor's ſquare:
"For ſhould the Lady W. ſin willing—
"Wormwood is bitter"——"Oh that's me—the villain?
"Throw it behind the fire, and never more
"Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart
To reach (our) feelings, we ourſelves muſt ſmart.
Is our young bard ſo young, to think that he
Can ſtop the full ſpring tide of calumny?
Knows he the world ſo little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's ſooner rais'd than laid.
So ſtrong, ſo ſwift a monſter, there's no gaging
Cut Scandal's head off—ſtill the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your ſmiles, once laviſhly beſtow'd,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road,
To ſhew his gratitude, he draws his pen,
And ſeeks this Hydra, ſcandal, in its den;
From his fell gripe the frighted fair to ſave——
Tho' he ſhould fall the attempt muſt pleaſe the brave,
For your applauſe, all perils he would through;
He'll fight—that's write—a cavaliero true,
Till ev'ry drop of blood—that's ink—is ſpilt for you.

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. COLMAN.

Spoken in the Character of Lady Teazle.

I Who was late ſo volatile and gay,
Like a trade wind muſt now blow all one way;

EPILOGUE.

Bend all my cares, my ſtudies and my vows,
To one old ruſty weather cock—my ſpouſe;
So wiſh our virtuous bard—the pye-ball'd Bayes
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays.
Old batchelors, who marry ſmart young wives,
Lean from our play to regulate your lives.
Each bring his dear to town—all faults upon her——
London will prove the very ſource of honour,
Plung'd fairly in, like a cold bath, it ſerves,
When principles relax——to brace the nerves.
Such is my caſe——and yet I muſt deplore
That the gay dream of diſſipation's o'er;
And ſay, ye fair, was every lively wife,
Born with a genius for the higheſt life,
Like me, untimely blaſted in her bloom;
Like me, condemn'd to ſuch a diſmal doom;
Save money——when I juſt knew how to waſte it!
Leave London—juſt as I began to taſte it!
Muſt I then watch the early crowing cock?
The melancholy ticking of a clock!
In the lone ruſtick hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and ſqualling brats ſurrounded,
With humble curates can I now retire
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the ſquire)
And at back gammon mortify my ſoul,
That pants for Lu, or flutters at a Vole?
Seven's the main! dear ſound! that muſt expire,
Roſt at hot cockles round a Chriſtmas fire!
The tranſient hour of Faſhion too ſoon ſpent,
"Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content
"Farewell the plumed head——the cuſhion'd tete,
"That takes the cuſhion from its proper ſeat!
"The ſpirit ſtirring drum! card drums I mean——
"Spadille, old Trick, Pam, Baſto, King and Queen
"And you he knockers, that with brazen throat,
"The welcome viſitor's approach denote,
"Farewell! All quality of high renown,
"Pride, Pomp, and circumſtance of glorious town,
"Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
"And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!"
All this I told our Bard, he ſmil'd, and ſaid 'twas clear
I ought to play deep tragedy next year;
Mean while he drew wiſe morals from his play,
And in theſe ſolemn periods ſtalk'd away.
"Bleſt were the fair, like you her faults who ſtopt
"And clos'd her follies when the curtain dropt!
"No more in vice or error to engage,
"Or play the fool at large on life's great ſtage!"

FINIS.